

2015

2015 Proceedings: Religious Values

Southern Adventist University School of Education and Psychology

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Recommended Citation

Southern Adventist University School of Education and Psychology; McCoy, John W.; Tym, Linda; Stankavich, Laurie; Byrd, Rachel; Ruf, Amanda; Gomez, Amanda; Bragg, Oliver; Adams, Colton; Fredheim, Sara; Royo, Adrienne; Nzokizwa, Pierre; and Tilstra, Doug, "2015 Proceedings: Religious Values" (2015). *Reynolds' Chair Symposium Proceedings*. 4.
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Reynolds Symposium

2015 PROCEEDINGS

Religious Values:

Paving the Way to Global Christian Citizenship

Proceedings of the
Reynolds Symposium: September 18-19, 2015

**Religious Values:
Paving the Way to Global Christian Citizenship.**

John W. McCoy, Reynolds Chair and Compiler
November 2014

Southern Adventist University
School of Education and Psychology

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PREFACE

The first annual Reynolds Symposium, titled “The Next Generation: Will It Be Adventist? Mining [Qualitative] Data from the Adventist Connection Study” was held September 21, 2013, on the campus of Southern Adventist University, Collegedale, Tennessee. The Symposium was hosted and organized by the Reynolds Chair, under the oversight of the School of Education and Psychology. The Reynolds Chair is a position established by Maurine Reynolds in honor of her parents, for the purpose of providing quality research and instruction in the area of religion and values at Southern Adventist University.

The second annual Reynolds Symposium was held September 19-20, 2014, the theme being “Music and Art Instruction: Promotion of Religion and Values or Just an Added Value to Higher Education?”

The third annual Reynolds Symposium was held September 18-19, 2015, also on the University’s campus. The theme was “Religious Values: Paving the Way to Global Christian Citizenship.” Featured academic departments were English, History, and Modern Languages.

Jesus tells us in Matthew 28: 19-20 that we are to “go and tell people of all nations the good news and baptize them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Teach them everything I’ve taught you.” How do we accomplish this if we do not teach our youth to be global Christian citizens? What is taking place in our classrooms at Southern Adventist University to respond to Jesus’ call? This weekend attendees found out just what is happening in our classrooms.

Opening this Symposium was the quartet from the music department, Ineffibilis. The proceedings began Friday evening with a panel presentation from the English department. Professors Rachel Byrd, Linda Tym, and Laurie Stankavich, accompanied by current student Amanda Ruf and former student Amanda Gomez, presented their perspective on global Christian citizenship; their writings follow this preface.

Sabbath morning we again heard from Ineffibilis as they serenaded us with a well-known hymn by Joseph Haydn entitled “Glorious Things of These are Spoken”. The words from this song summarized the entire weekend theme:

Glorious things of thee are spoken, Zion, city of our God! He, whose Word cannot be broken, Formed thee for His own abode; On the Rock of Ages founded, What can shake thy sure repose? With salvation’s walls surrounded, Thou mayst smile at all thy foes.

See, the streams of living waters, Springing from eternal love, Well supply thy sons and daughters, And all fear of want remove: Who can faint while such a river Ever flows their thirst t’ assuage? Grace which, like the Lord, the giver, Never fails from age to age.

Round each habitation hov’ring, See the cloud and fire appear, For a glory and a cov’ring, Showing that the Lord is near; Thus deriving from our banner Light by night and shade by day, Safe they feed upon the manna Which He gives them when they pray.

Blest inhabitants of Zion, Washed in the Redeemer’s blood! Jesus, whom their souls rely on, Makes them kings and priests to God; ’Tis His love His people raises Over self to reign as kings, And as priests, His solemn praises Each for a thank off’ring brings.

Savior, if of Zion’s city, I through grace a member am, Let the world deride or pity, I will glory in Thy name; Fading is the worldling’s pleasure, All his boasted pomp and show; Solid joys and lasting treasure, None but Zion’s children know.

Following this, the History department presented a panel of current and former students. It's always wonderful to hear from our students to determine if what we think we are delivering is actually what is taking place. Oliver Bragg presented a current student perspective, and Colton Adams and Sara Fredheim gave a look back from alumni perspectives.

The Modern Languages department, with Adrienne Royo and Pierre Nzokizwa, rounded out the department presentations with their PowerPoint lectures. They shared the power of multilingualism and insights into the cultures of the world. Professor Doug Tilstra, from the School of Education and Psychology, closed with a summary of the proceedings.

One might wonder how these three departments, with their distinctive foci on academics, would be able to find any common ground. But, interestingly enough, the common themes of Christian witness, accepting cultural differences, and living a life of Christ-like love were present on each of these presentations. These characteristics all contribute to pave the way to global Christian citizenship.

I express my sincere appreciation to Burt Coolidge for his foresight and leadership in providing for the direction of the Reynolds Chair. I am thankful to Lisa Diller, Keely Tary, and Adrienne Royo, Chairs of the History, English, and Modern Languages departments, respectively. Many thanks also to Thiffany Reynoso for her tireless planning, as well as in putting together the collection of material from each presenter. I am also thankful for the student quartet who provided special music on Friday and Sabbath morning. Thank you to all who attended this annual event. I pray that you were blessed by what you experienced.

John W. McCoy, Ed.D.

Reynolds Chair

September, 2015.

NO MAN IS AN ISLAND: INSTABILITY, ISOLATION, AND THE POSTMODERN CHRISTIAN

Linda Tym

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No man is an island entire of itself; every man is a piece of the continent, a part of the main; if a clod be washed away by the sea, Europe is the less, as well as if a promontory were, as well as any manner of thy friends or of thine own were; any man's death diminishes me, because I am involved in mankind. And therefore never send to know for whom the bell tolls; it tolls for thee.

- Meditation XVII -

Devotions upon Emergent Occasions

John Donne

In this selection from "Meditation XVII," John Donne addresses the communion that humans require. The words underscore that through our interactions with others, our self becomes "a piece of the continent. No man is an island entire of itself" (Donne). Donne's simple, yet incredibly well known phrase – the metaphoric use of an island to represent a human – not only offers us a concrete image of key Postmodernist concerns, but also encapsulates the focus of my discussion: instability, isolation, and the individual.

A defining component of the individual is memory and in the next few minutes, I would like to share with you how theories of an individual's memory relate to postmodern preoccupations with instability and isolation. I will close with a brief study of how these theories, rather than enforcing alienation, may instead offer insight into our own faith community and individual spiritual development.

First, instability. Returning to Donne's metaphor of an island, we can see that it is a finite space; however, as one traces its circular edge, we observe that an island has an infinite border. An island is concrete, a space set apart from another and yet its boundary blurs and bleeds into the edge of the sea. Gillian Beer has noted how the island – in a meeting of water and earth – expresses "twin desolations, in which the self-drifts or is confined" (5). In fact, she argues that "[t]he word 'island' has peculiar force in English which emphasizes its connection with individualism. The sounded 'I' at the beginning of the word creates" a clear reminder of the individual (15). With the image of the island as a metaphor of the individual,

we can explore the concept of the self that Postmodernism encourages us to consider: the isolation of the individual who is set apart; the unstable boundaries of identity; the blurring fringes of perception.

The conception of the individual has had its own metamorphosis and has been long associated with who a person claims to be, how he or she behaves, and what that person has experienced in the past – an individual's *memory*. Memory itself is ever unfolding. Memory requires two things: physical action and mental stimulation. Through a sensory encounter with the external world (taste, touch, sight, smell, sound), experience is communicated to and embedded within the mind. Memory, therefore, is an internal reaction to an external event. What is sensed and experienced each day becomes added to the repertoire of an individual's mind and within that mind, the past is commemorated, recollected, or remembered (“Memory”).

The depiction of memory itself has a long past. From early Greek sources through the Medieval and Renaissance eras, memory has been consistently understood in spatial or geographical terms (Yates). Because it is located within the mind, representations of it have often appeared as buildings, imprints, and other images that expose its inherent physicality. Since the 18th century, the understanding of memory has expanded. In fact, we have come to link personal identity directly to concepts of causation, space, and time. A sense of a continuous identity connects an individual's present experience with one's past (Warnock 62-63). To understand an individual's identity, we must identify and accept that the same person has lived through a specific time. We must assume the “*continuity . . . of a spatial object [such as a person], which can move and change, but yet [is] said to be the same*” (Warnock 66-67 – emphasis original). For example, we must believe that a person we see before us is, in fact, the same person who we knew years ago or who we see in photographs from childhood. Memory, therefore, enables us to maintain that sense of continuity, but it is both a mental and a “*physical continuity of body over time*” (Warnock 69 – emphasis original).

The recognition that although an individual's memory and body is continuous over time, but simultaneously is subject to change invites us to acknowledge the instability of the self. It also offers us a way to consider the extent of an individual's isolation. As a representation of the past, memory is contained within the mind of the individual; however, memory may not remain isolated. Memory can also be

transferred and shared within a family or community; therefore, the depiction of memory is multifaceted and diverse. Because memory is the union of mental and emotional topography, critics such as Jonathan Boyarin extend the discussion of space beyond the individual's body to a discussion of communal space. Boyarin exposes a paradox: memory is individual, yet it is both collective and symbolic; memory is shared between people, but it is embodied within the individual (Boyarin 26). However, these seemingly incompatible elements, he insists, disappear if the emphasis is placed upon "the constitution of both group 'membership' and individual 'identity' out of a dynamically chosen selection of memories, and the constant reshaping, reinvention, and reinforcement of those memories as members contest and create the boundaries and links among themselves" (Boyarin 26). Acknowledging the need to incorporate both individual and collective memory encourages us to, once again, shift our understanding. Although memory has been linked the continuity of an individual's identity over time, it also becomes a bridge into fellowship with others. The individual need not remain isolated. Memory is inherently linked both to the individual and to others: it is embodied, embedded, within our heads, but it is also how we build and establish a sense of community with others – as we retrieve our memories, we share stories, impressions, and experiences.

Returning to the epigraph for this discussion, notice that John Donne does not conclude his thought that "No man is an Island" immediately: he does not place the expected full stop or period. Donne also does not use a conjunction to join the statements; rather, Donne uses a semicolon – the simplest, most concise way to unite two seemingly contradictory elements: people and geographical space. The independent clause is reliant on another element, just as the individual is "a piece of the continent, a part of the main" and, therefore, not alone. Embedded even within the textual structure of his writings, Donne reminds us that we are intimately interconnected.

There is another text written on an island that centres on concepts of instability, isolation, and an individual's memory. In the Book of Revelation, we find John, an isolated prisoner on the island of Patmos. This beloved disciple recounts his visions *after* he has experienced them. The record we have is one of his memory: he writes in past tense. Notice in chapter 1, verse 10: he "heard . . . a great voice" and in verse 17,

he "saw Him [the Son of Man]." John's revelations are through sensory experience and are embedded within his mind. However, John does not simply retain these prophetic visions for his own use: he does not isolate his experience on the island. He is commanded to "Write the things which you have seen and the things which are, and the things which will take place after this" (Revelation 1.19). The attempt to shift sensory impressions into a communicable form of language is challenging, but John is determined to build a community with his words. To the global community of believers, from Asia Minor to our contemporary church, John transcribes the memory of his vision, an act that releases him from the isolation of his experience and establishes a communion with others.

Isolation, instability, and the individual. Consider with me, for a moment, the implications of combining our belief in the prophecies of Revelation with these Postmodernist concepts of memory and the self within our own context: Seventh-day Adventists dedicated to the pursuit of knowledge and education. How might these concepts enable us to reframe our own identity?

The Seventh-day Adventist message is a direct descendent of the Protestant emphasis upon the primacy of The Word. God's gift – a textual representation of *His* character – is shared with us through language. The Bible holds within it a myriad of memories and moments of how God has worked. But note that no single representation of God is the same. There is consistency; there is unity; but not stagnancy.

God is both Author *and* Creator.

God is both Father *and* Brother.

God is both Saviour *and* Judge.

God is both the Alpha *and* the Omega.

God is both the Lamb *and* the Lion.

God is both the Maker *and* the Breaker of Law.

Protestantism not only focuses on The Word, but also on the peculiar – the unique – status of the individual believer. We believe that each person may read the Bible for his or herself and may communicate directly with the Divine. Through the multiple Biblical representations of God, we can receive testimonies

of His character. Through every day sensory experiences and through reading the multifaceted depictions of God in The Word, the believer may cultivate his or her relationship with God. The multiple illustrations of God, however, can never fully encompass who He is. We may have insight into *some* of who he is, but never *ALL* of who he is. Were our representations and perceptions of God stable and complete, than he – fundamentally – would not *be* God. He would be finite. Each person can see shimmers and glimpses of who He is, but he is ever greater than any one person's perception or conception of Him. If we, as humans, have a multitude of memories, which shape us daily into new creatures of God's handiwork, then how much more glorious is it that *collectively* we can share our individual conceptions of God! Adapting Boyarin's discussion of the communal importance of memory, I would encourage us to examine our role as a community of believers. As Christians, we can place an emphasis both on "the constitution of group 'membership' *and* individual 'identity' out of a dynamically chosen selection of memories" that are constantly reshaped, reinvented, and reinforced as we "contest and create the boundaries and links" within our community (Boyarin 26). In doing so, in sharing ourselves with each other and with our Creator, we craft a beautiful mosaic of Our Lord. Through this daily practice, we are promised that although "for now we see through a glass, darkly;" that *someday* we will see "face to face": now [we] know in part; but then shall [we] know even as also [we are] known" (1 Corinthians 13:12).

It is through this ever shifting kaleidoscope of God's character, that we can see the beautiful mosaic that memory and language offer us. We need not fear instability and isolation. The isolation – the diminishment – we may feel in this world because we are "involved in mankind" will not remain forever (Donne). In this life, we can seek to share our memories with others, our revelations into who God is. In the next life, as John writes in Revelation 21 and 22, we will continue to revel in our ever-expanding understanding of God in the New Heaven and the New Earth "forever and ever." In communion with other believers, the individual will be "a part of the main" and "new truth will continually unfold to the wondering and delighted mind" (Donne; White 651).

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THE POWER OF PARADOX

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One of my challenges in returning to graduate school to work on my PhD in English has been engaging the postmodernist worldview. It has been an ongoing process of disentangling meaningful insights from potential threats to faith. Scholarship in humanities tends to foster a critical mindset. Conceiving of the humanities as a potentially hostile environment added a further dimension of suspicion to my early encounters with ideas in what was in many ways a new field for me. Since scholarship continually reconstructs one's views of the world, I know that I will always be comparing disciplinary conceptions with eternal truths. But I have not only come to feel at home in my discipline but often welcome a chance to "complicate" or "problematize" the way I see the world—as long as the core tenets of my faith remain my anchor.

One of the starkest contrasts I have found between my Christian paradigm and postmodern thought involves the concept of power and power relations. In the postmodern narrative, historical processes have handed power to certain groups and classes of people who, in turn, oppress historically disempowered classes and groups. To cite just one example, Western imperial powers took advantage of colonial populations, creating economic and political imbalances that linger to this day. Michel Foucault, the postmodernist thinker who pioneered this view, explored the relationship between power and knowledge, arguing that social institutions both exert social control and shape what can be known. In *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault writes, "There is no power relation without the correlative constitution of a field of knowledge, nor any knowledge that does not presuppose and constitute at the same time power relations" (27). Cultural critic Henry Giroux argues that postmodernism and other radical theories serve as a foundation for a critical pedagogy that engages and overturns unjust power structures (32). Thus, education

becomes “a form of political intervention in the world that is capable of creating the possibilities for social transformation.” Given the postmodernist view that “knowledge, values, desire, and social relations are always implicated in relations of power,” for Giroux, “learning is not about processing received knowledge but actually transforming it as part of a more expansive struggle for individual rights and social justice” (34).

But if social institutions construct the world and its meanings, if nothing can be known beyond what the power structures have constructed, how can we know anything different? How can we remove our blinders to transform our world?

Christianity offers a counterintuitive alternative to the postmodern paradigm of power. I remember exactly when I arrived at this epiphany. I was reading an article for classical rhetoric with the rather daunting title of “Rhetoric on the Edge of Cunning: Or, the Performance of Neutrality (Re)considered as a Composition Pedagogy for Student Resistance.” I knew from the abstract that I was going to be arguing a lot in the margin. On the first page, for example, I wrote “huh??” “Ok...” and “sounds subversive.” Fairly soon the key theme of critical theory emerged—the assumption that the world is ordered in a way that unfairly privileges certain groups and that the mission of a scholar and teacher must be to overturn these iniquitous power structures. Pedagogy that is not political activism “remains complicit with hegemonic discourses” (Kopelson, 120). Pedagogy that does not fight against the status quo, “neutrality,” that is, “has been the very ‘cornerstone’ of an elitest, exclusionary, masculinist ‘Western intellectual tradition, established by white, heterosexual men to safeguard their privilege’” (Kopelson, 122, citing Ng). The goal of critical pedagogy, therefore, is to overturn this status quo so that the non-Western, the non-white, women, and those who do not fit the normal gender paradigms may have their voices heard and, by being granted a voice, may claim what is rightfully theirs.

That the world is not a fair place none of us would deny, but, as I noted in the margin of my article, the author and the postmodern narrative is “wrong about what’s wrong.” As some critics of postmodernism have pointed out, replacing the powerful with the powerless—if it is even possible—can promise little but a

new dominant class and a chance for the oppressors to be oppressed for a while. I would like to argue that that a great paradox of Christianity is an anti-power view of power, and that this is the only possible remedy for the woes of a Post-Fall world, the only way out of a tug-of-war between winners and losers. The way of love, as Ellen White points out in the first chapter of *Steps to Christ*, is a law of service, a law of humility, a law of continual pouring out, of giving rather than taking. I am reminded of the Philippians 2 model. Christ, who has all the power of the universe, chose a position of weakness, a position of powerlessness as the most powerful way of all, the way to reverse the damage of the Fall and overturn the power structure of the world.

“Who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, *and* coming in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to *the point of* death, even the death of the cross. Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and *that* every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ *is* Lord, to the glory of God the Father” (Philippians 2:6-11).

The followers of Christ must adopt a similar view of power. After all, the passage in Philippians begins with, “Let this mind be in you.” We, too, must descend the ladder of power. We too must lose everything, for as Matthew 16:25 reminds us, “whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it.”

The rhetoric of cunning presented in the article for my graduate class, in fact, masks a coercive pedagogy. The author of the article argues that “sincerity and honesty are always and only evidence of... continued subordination”. Instead, the teacher should pretend a neutrality that is, in reality, a “performance... a politics that openly anticipates and prepares for desired end results” (Kopelson, 134). Christ, on the other hand, does not coerce, manipulate, or deceive. The anti-power position instead empowers each human being with true freedom.

Let us be clear, though. Embracing the Christian paradigm of power—a paradigm that subverts both modernist and postmodernist power structures—does not preclude a concern for social transformation. Like the postmodern champions of critical pedagogy, Christian scholars and teachers do believe in identifying with and fighting for the oppressed. We do want to address injustice in our classrooms and spread this concern to our students. Remember how Jesus defined his ministry in Luke 4:18:

“Because He has anointed Me
To preach the gospel to the poor;
He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted,
To proclaim liberty to the captives
And recovery of sight to the blind,
To set at liberty those who are oppressed;”

As Christians, we join Christ in this ministry. But with this agenda comes the understanding that as long as we live on this earth, saddled with a fallen human nature and under constant attack by the forces of evil, that all social remedies will be temporary and partial. Demonizing Western, white, male and heterosexual elites and valorizing oppressed Non-Western, female, people of color will not save the world. Salvation comes one human heart at a time, and it is available to the oppressors as well as the oppressed. All have sinned and come short of the glory of God.

In his book, *You Can Make a Difference*, Tony Campolo tells a story about a young Mennonite pacifist challenged by another Mennonite who believed that the denomination needed to change its historical pacifist position. Because this was the Cold War era, the challenger told him, “One of these days, the Russians will come and take everything you’ve got.”

The young man smiled and pointed out that he owned nothing, that he had given everything to Jesus when he became a Christian (Campolo, 60).

The other man answered, “All right, but don’t forget that they can kill you.”

The young man shot back, “They can’t kill me. You see, mister, I’m already dead.”

This is the secret power of the powerless, the secret of the martyrs. As the young man summed it up for his challenger, “That’s the secret of freedom. If you don’t own anything, if you’re already dead, and if you rejoice when people torture you, then there isn’t much they can do to you. There just isn’t any way they can threaten you, is there?” (Campolo, 61).

Paradoxically, this is ultimate power. This is the power of those whose kingdom is not of this world. That is the power of the Hebrews 11, the faith chapter. The power of Abel, who died a martyr, and the power of Enoch, who never saw death. The power of those who saw an Egyptian army swallowed by the sea and the power of those stoned, sawn in two, and slain with the sword. Because when this world is not our home, we all have equal share in the final victory when the stone cut not by human hands destroys every regime of earthly power, when “the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver, and the gold [are] crushed together, and [become] like chaff from the summer threshing floors,” when “stone [becomes] a great mountain and [fills] the whole earth.” When this world is not our home, what happens to us here—whether we share power with kings as Daniel did or live as an outcast, we are more than conquerors.

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ONE BELIVER LOOKS AT POSTMODERNISM AND THE BIBLE.

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Epistemology is the word for humanity's search for knowledge. How do we know what we know?

Early Western philosophers found certainty in Idealism. Plato, for example, saw as certain the universal, transcendent Forms, of which sensory objects and experiences are imperfect examples. Jews, Christians, and Muslims trusted in divine revelations, prophecy, and miracles. Roman Catholics in the medieval period found the authority of the church rested on the miracles of the saints.

Philosophical thinkers began to discard the Idealism of the Transcendental soon after the Renaissance. Empiricists, pragmatists, rationalists came to regard the Transcendental as unknowable. Materialism--what we can ourselves observe--became the foundation of knowledge.

Subsequent, more recent philosophers have rejected Reason, Consciousness, the Self, the senses, emotion, experience as unreliable.

To reject not only the transcendental, the ideal, but also the phenomenal, the material, constitutes what I call the Postmodern turn. For postmodern thinkers all possibilities for epistemological certainty have proved problematical. Postmodernism comes from the conviction that complete and certain proofs are not possible. There is nothing Outside that can certainly confirm what I believe.

In this rejection of all previous attempts at epistemological certainties, what remains? When remains when the Ideal cannot be known, when not only the Ideal but also the Material is unreliable and transitory?

The Postmodern answer is, what endures is language. We have not Truth with a capital T, but Stories. We have metanarratives, attempts at making sense of our world, none of which is fully accurate or complete. Language and culture do not provide epistemological certainties; they are, instead, what we actually have. Postmodernism has emerged from epistemological uncertainty.

Because of the contested nature of that slippery, amorphous concept, Postmodernism, I will now limit my discussion to its subset, Deconstruction.

Deconstruction presents several insights about language: Some of these are problematical for Seventh-day Adventist Christians, who accept the authority of the Scriptures. It is true that those who reject the certainties of all ways of knowing can seem to directly oppose belief in God. Nevertheless, deconstruction offers us some philosophical insights that I have found useful in my own thinking as a Seventh-day Adventist:

First, writing cannot reproduce some inner or outer Reality or Experience. Thoughts or spoken words are not necessarily superior to writing. What is spoken or written is itself the reality or the experience, which cannot be identical with the thoughts or memories. Writing is not an empty vehicle into which thoughts and experiences are deposited but is itself a new experience. There are then two experiences: 1) what occurred in action or what was said then, and 2) what occurred on the page. Neither of these two is the Reality to which the other must be compared.

Second, the author does not fully control the meaning of the text. Because language is socially and culturally constructed, words and idioms have connotations beyond the writer's control at the moment of composition. Individual genius is not fully responsible for those conventions of language and culture which produce writing.

Third, the reader re-creates the text with each reading. The experience of each reading is different from every other reading. My reading is different from your reading because our life experiences and our understanding of the words are not identical. Each of my readings of the same text will be somewhat different. Even the author re-reading what he or she has written will observe his or her own text differently with each reading.

Last, an author (or teacher) is not the "creator of knowledge," which can be poured into readers (or students). Rather, reading and learning are reciprocal activities to which both authors (teachers) and readers

(students) contribute in the making of meaning (learning). All members of the learning community create meaning.

How do we, as Seventh-day Adventist Christians, relate to these insights? Here are my thoughts: As Seventh-day Adventist Christians we accept the idea of God as a real Person, and we believe that real ultimate Truth exists. What deconstruction can teach us, however, is to mistrust our perceptions of God and of Truth.

The sacred texts of the Bible are crucial for us, I believe, because they are reality and the only reality we truly have. The Bible tells us about the real reality that is "out there," the reality that we cannot ordinarily experience, the reality that God exists, that heaven is a Real Place, that there is eternity beyond our mortal existence here.

As a Christian, I am an Idealist. Jesus, the angels in this room, the Holy Spirit within my heart are realities that I can know and trust, though I cannot see and measure these realities. I cannot necessarily convince an unbeliever, however, that these supernatural beings exist. Furthermore, my understanding of the spiritual realm is incomplete and not necessarily accurate.

Therefore I must tenaciously read the Bible itself and strenuously resist placing my full confidence in interpretation. I must strenuously resist standing before others to present my reading of the Bible as Truth. I must continually re-assess my understanding of the Bible, not removing from it what I cannot interpret and not adding to it with my speculations.

As Seventh-day Adventists we are told to test the validity of empirical experience by the Bible itself: "Antichrist is to perform his marvelous works in our sight. So closely will the counterfeit resemble the true that it will be impossible to distinguish between them except by the Holy Scriptures. By their testimony every statement and every miracle must be tested" (White, *Great Controversy* 593. See also Isaiah 8:20; 2 Corinthians 11:13, 14; 2 Thessalonians 2:9, 10.) In the same chapter Ellen White continues,

But God will have a people upon the earth to maintain the Bible, and the Bible only, as the standard of all doctrines and the basis of all reforms. The opinions of learned men, the

deductions of science, the creeds or decisions of ecclesiastical councils, as numerous and discordant as are the churches they represent, the voice of the majority--not one nor all of these should be regarded as evidence for or against any point of religious faith. Before accepting any doctrine or precept, we should demand a plain "Thus saith the Lord" in its support. (White, *Great Controversy* 595)

The important implication for Christians is that Truth cannot be known without reference to God, that a literary text can be "true" only as it acknowledges and harmonizes with the Truth revealed by God, and that the evidence of our senses and our consciousness is reliable only in reference to the sacred texts.

Let's go back to the reliability of the Bible itself. As Seventh-day Adventists we have historically taught that the Bible is a document written in human language. Except for the Ten Commandments, which were written by the finger of God (Deuteronomy 9:10), these sacred texts were not dictated by God but were written in human language by human beings inspired by the Holy Spirit.

The instability of human language is a historic tenet of our church. The prophet Ezekiel was not given the words to write what he saw in vision, and the earthly words he wrote seem hardly adequate to describe the heavenly things he saw: "a great cloud with brightness round about it, and fire flashing forth continually" and four living creatures with four faces and four wings which "darted to and fro, like a flash of lightning" (Ezekiel 1:4, 14). Because Ezekiel did not have the vocabulary of heavenly language, he had to frame what he saw in the words he had.

Authors employ idioms and phrases, words and combinations of words, which are current in their own languages and cultures. As Seventh-day Adventists we have never claimed there are no mistakes in the Bible (White, *Selected Messages* I.16). In the work of God's messenger, Ellen G. White, we see a picture of the way inspiration works. God provides visions and insights, which then must be composed in the language and culture of the author. White never claimed that every phrase she wrote was totally original. To write totally original language is not possible for any author, as deconstruction theory makes clear, because language is socially and culturally constructed. Furthermore, White employed editors, who

helped her organize material and correct syntax and grammar and citations to the editing standards of the time. Seventh-day Adventists have never claimed infallibility or inerrancy for her. Neither have we claimed that the Holy Scriptures are without mistake.

The Bible text includes words, particularly in the Psalms and in the book of Job, which have no counterpart in other ancient texts and therefore are not well understood. We do not have, and will never have, perfect knowledge and understanding of the Bible. Neither will we ever have complete and perfect knowledge of God. In the introduction to *The Great Controversy* White clearly expressed this understanding of human language when she wrote:

God has been pleased to communicate His truth to the world by human agencies, and He Himself, by His Holy Spirit, qualified men and enabled them to do this work. He guided the mind in the selection of what to speak and what to write. The treasure was entrusted to earthen vessels, yet it is, nonetheless, from Heaven. The testimony is conveyed through the imperfect expression of human language, yet it is the testimony of God; and the obedient, believing child of God beholds in it the glory of divine power, full of grace and truth. (*Great Controversy* vi-vii)

Ellen White explained,

It is not the words of the Bible that are inspired, but the men that were inspired. Inspiration acts not on the man's words or his expressions but on the man himself, who, under the influence of the Holy Ghost, is imbued with thoughts. But the words receive the impress of the individual mind. The divine mind is diffused. The divine mind and will is combined with the human mind and will; thus the utterances of the man are the word of God. (*Selected Messages* I. 21)

Not only is human language faulty, but, more significantly, human understanding is incomplete. We will never have a perfect knowledge of God. We do not have a perfect knowledge of the experience of others. We do not fully understand our own motives and behavior.

But although language is not reliable as objective truth that applies to everyone everywhere at all times, although full and complete Truth cannot be known, Truth does exist. God is Truth, and throughout eternity God will never be completely known.

The postmodern argument that meaning and truth are social constructs teaches us that while language cannot give us perfect Truth, it can give us stories, narratives which explain the world. The Bible offers to us the narratives which teach us what we can know about God Himself. Our knowledge is partial. As written by the inspired writer, however, our knowledge can be as accurate as faulty human language can allow it to be. The Bible can be the truest Truth we know.

Some deconstructionists have argued that stories provide a way to power. As we all know, power can be used well or abused. Power in language can be a way to oppress others, to marginalize others, to silence others. We can use language to get what we want.

Even the Bible itself can be used--or misused--to support viewpoints which oppress others. For example, a key text for judges in the Tudor period in England was Luke 14:23: "Go out into the highways and hedges and compel them to come in." Another text used to support the unity of christendom, compelling all to obedience to the state church, was Matthew 13:48: "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a dragnet cast into the sea, and gathering fish of every kind." This text was used to require confession and mass, for the gospel net gathers both good and bad fish, which are not sorted "until the end." A third text, Matthew 28:20, "Lo, I am with you alway," was used by Sir Thomas More to support his contention that the Catholic Church could not teach damnable error.¹ The shepherd, therefore, ought to cull from the flock all heretical sheep, lest they infect others, the idea from which he argued for the burning of heretics.²

¹ More, Thomas, *Dialogue Concerning Heresies [A Dialogue Concerning Tyndale]* (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1927), Book I. chs. 18-19, pp. 69, 71-72; ch. 22, pp. 79, 98.

² More, *Dialogue Concerning Heresies* Book IV. ch. 14, p. 305.

Tyndale argued there are two swords, the spiritual and the temporal. William Tyndale, *The Obedience of a Christian Man* (Antwerp, 1528), ed. David Daniell (Penguin, 2000), 175.

The English radical William Tyndale had a different view of the Bible. In a time when the church offered four different methods of interpretation³ Tyndale argued that "the Scripture hath but one sense [or method of interpretation] which is the literal sense" (*Obedience* 156). He added, "Neverthelater the scripture useth proverbs, similitudes, riddles or allegories as all other speeches do, but that which the proverb, similitude, riddle or allegory signifieth is ever the literal sense which thou must seek out diligently" (*Obedience* 156). For Tyndale the literal sense must prove the allegory: "Moreover if I could not prove with an open text that which the allegory doth express, then were the allegory a thing to be jested at and of no greater value than a tale of Robin Hood" (*Obedience* 159; see also 164-165).

For Tyndale, the authority of scripture trumps the authority of the church: "I rede thee, get thee to God's word and thereby try all doctrine and against that receive nothing" (*Obedience* 176). The scripture makes possible pointing out errors of the church, Tyndale taught, such as the authority of the fathers, ceremonies and sacraments, miracles of the saints, pardons, purgatory, and penance (*Obedience* 176-177, 190).

Tyndale, in translating and printing the English Bible, demonstrated his conviction that every person should "read the word of thy soul's health" (*Obedience* 3). To the objection of the priests, "if the scripture were in the mother tongue, they will say, then would the lay people understand it every man after his own ways" (*Obedience* 16), Tyndale answered, "Yea why shall I not see the scripture and the circumstances and what goeth before and after, that I may know whether thine interpretation be the right sense, or whether thou jugglest and drawest the scripture violently unto thy carnal and fleshly purpose? Or whether thou be about to teach me or to deceive me?" (*Obedience* 17). Tyndale explained that the scripture allows the people to discern truth from error in the sermons and brawls of the priests (*Obedience* 17-20).

Tyndale added an important idea that postmodernism has pointed out to us: we know God by the text. We do not know everything about God, but we may know Him through His Word: "God is not man's imagination, but that only which he saith of himself. God is nothing but his law and his promises, that is to

³ The literal, the tropological, the allegorical, and the anagogical (Tyndale, *Obedience* 156).

say, that which he biddeth thee do and that which he biddeth thee believe and hope. God is but his word: as Christ saith (John 8). . . . God is only that which he testifieth of himself and to imagine any other thing of God than that, is damnable idolatry" (*Obedience* 24).

We see in Tyndale's book these principles for reading the Bible text:

1. The scriptures should be read literally.
2. The authority of the scriptures ought to correct the church.
3. All should read the Bible for their own spiritual health and for knowing truth from error.
4. To read and receive the promises of the Bible is to believe and receive God Himself.

When Tyndale gave the Bible to the English people in their own language, he was truly giving them power to change their government and their culture.

To me, reading the Bible is ever new. Each time I read a passage is a different experience than my previous reading because I bring new life-understandings and experiences to my reading. And I find great inspiration and richness in hearing the readings and interpretations of others in the community of believers, as each one brings to us all our differing views of Bible passages.

In one sense the Reformation was about who has the right to read the sacred texts, how they should be read, and whose interpretation has authority over whom. For Sir Thomas More, only those who had the proper education and could be trusted with loyalty to the church had the right to read the Bible; it could be read only in harmony with the traditional teachings of the official church; and its interpretation was governed by church councils, who had authority over all christendom.

For Tyndale, on the other hand, anyone should be allowed to read the Bible in the vernacular, the texts should be read in the most literal sense with the Bible as its own interpreter, and each reader's understanding should be respected or at least allowed. We should not be surprised that individuals reading a text differ in what they regard as important and even differ in the way they apply the Bible text to the lives they live. Tyndale himself vigorously promoted the authority of the scriptures as superior to all human authority. Before Tyndale in the fifteenth century, few Lollards were burned as heretics. After Tyndale

hundreds stood firm to their own readings of scripture and submitted to death rather than to give up what they understood to be the truth. The first prominent martyrs burned in the reign of Henry VIII owned a Tyndale Bible and owned Tyndale's book *The Obedience of the Christian Man*. Thus, the authority of the Word gained power over the authority of church and state.

This view of who should read the Bible and how it should be interpreted gave birth to the multiplicity of religious opinions which continually increased until, in the seventeenth century, religious multiplicity could no longer be contained by the state church and to a large degree forced the English government to permit nonconformity. Thus we see the power of the text to change culture through language.

Language is power. God has revealed Himself in His Word. Yes, we must always be cautious with our own interpretations and impartial understandings. Nevertheless, the written word, the good news, is God's message to us, "the power of God until salvation to everyone who believes" (Romans 1:16). God's word gives human beings the "power to become the sons of God (John 1:12)."

And clearer understanding comes to us as we interact with the text: "The student must be drawn to state the truth in his own language" (White, *Testimonies*, VI. 154). Our need to speak in words is the reason we must pray in words, either aloud or in a journal. It is true that the Holy Spirit can pray for us (Rom. 8:26), with groanings which cannot be uttered, but we don't really know what we pray until we put our prayers into language. White comments on the value of this devotional practice: "From the place of secret prayer came the power that shook the world in the Great Reformation. There, with holy calmness, the servants of the Lord set their feet upon the rock of His promises" (White, *Great Controversy* 210), the great promises of God's Word, which are the greatest Truth and the greatest Power we can know.

A 21ST CENTURY STUDENT OF CHRISTIANITY AND POSTMODERNISM

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Let me introduce myself. I am Amanda Ruf, a double major in History and English. This is my fourth year at Southern, but I feel it has been a lot longer than that—both my parents have been professors here for quite a while, and the campus has been my second home. I have fond memories of hanging out in Brock as a kid, watching Nickelodeon (which we did not get at home) and scowling at college students (which is a lot harder to do now that I actually am one).

For this presentation, I wanted to talk about my continuing encounters with postmodernism and the global community as a student of the humanities at a Christian university. By now, I have taken more than several college classes involving critical theory and different approaches to subjects, but just as I felt I was a Southern regular long before I was a Southern student, I feel I was studying viewpoints for years before I formally encountered them at the university. I wanted to know: *What do people think?* And then, of course: *What do I think about what people think?* Having not much knowledge on my own, I had to go gather it from the world. The same remains true today. I am still a student—a student of history, english, humanities, sciences and systems and philosophies as well, a student of *life*. That is to say, of people! Not just the people around me, but all the people around the globe—the global community. *What do people think?* From my middle school days onward, I realized I can find that out easily. I can talk with others in person, yes, but for those I cannot meet, I can read their books and articles and posts, or I can watch and listen to them on a device. I am living in a technologically-rich society in the postmodern era. I hate to admit it to my professors, but the Internet taught me so much of I know about the world, life, and people. In my classes, I learn about different faith systems, literary theories, economic policies, established medical treatments—a great variety of subjects. But that is just the beginning. When I go online, I have instant access to a truly

massive amount and array of information, offering me the chance to deepen my understanding and really explore an issue. And a lot of it is in condensed form, which is lovely because heaven knows I do not have the time to read an additional book on top of the one's I am already studying!

Now, I know the Internet has a somewhat dismal reputation as a virtual wasteland of porn, ranting arguments, and trivial videos and memes. But I am here to tell you, while everything on it may not be Encyclopedia Britannica, the web is so valuable for a student of humanity, because it offers space for everyone's voice. This is what I am interested in: *What do people think?* Read an article, watch a video, discuss in the comments (respectfully!)—this is how I learn more and more about the global community. It is so easy, I feel I have no excuses as a member of that community to *not* know what is going on outside my little world, to not know how other humans have approached and are approaching life.

In some Christian circles—and certainly a few of my Bible classes—*postmodernism* is a bit of dirty word. Automatically, it is equated with a total lack of morality, a meaningless philosophy of the 20th and 21st century that the lost and the wicked have cobbled together in their godless ignorance. But I suspect that postmodernism, at least at this current time, cannot be dismissed or reduced to such obvious evil. The way I see it, the heart of postmodernism is a multiplicity of voices—which, upon reflection, is not a solely postmodern or even modern thing at all. There has been a variety of voices for as long as there has been a variety of humans. Never before our time, however, there been such widespread awareness of this variety. With the strengthening of global ties and communication, the fog has been lifting on the vast sea of thoughts, opinions, and perspectives. Postmodernism involves the acknowledgement of this sea—and in that sense, that specific sense, postmodernism is not inherently anti-Christian or anti-truth. I see postmodernism even in my classes whenever we take the claims of other perspectives seriously and acknowledged that, yes, there are these ideas that a lot of people wholeheartedly believe in, and yes, those people are children of God too. I see it when we engage with non-Christian or non-Adventist texts, and when we read or listen to each other's differing thoughts. Most of all, I see it when we talk to and converse with those of other

mindsets. Human-to-human, island-to-island—that is the global community connecting with each other. It is how I participate in that community.

I am very thankful I get to do that. This local Christian community, this university as a whole does not fear other voices, nor does it have any need to. The light does not flee from the darkness, it is the other way around—truth has nothing to fear. God did not give His people the minds of sheep; he gave us the minds of rational free will. So let students of humanity encounter humanity. Let them find out, *What do people think?* Because it is only then that one can decide, *What do I think about what people think?*

CULTURE, CHRISTIANITY, AND INTERNET MEMES

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In January 2015, the Biblical Research Institute stated that the women's ordination "debate may have negative effects on the church's outreach and on its reputation in the general public" and "the same may be true of our church members and young people." While this presentation is not meant to weigh in on the debate itself, I would be remiss if I did not say that both the debate and the outcome of the 2015 General Conference was an inspirational spark. Specifically, it is interesting to note the response from Generation M and the methods in which they voiced their dissent and engaged with one another.

Due to the transition from Web 1.0 to Web 2.0, which for general purposes denotes the rise of social networks; we have seen no longer just information publishing, but information creation. Technology has become an extension of one's identity used as a tool for public discourse. Throughout the 2015 General Conference, many took to social media to disengage from the established meta-narrative. Technology became a means to engage in discourse during a time in which the church could no longer bind the voices of dissent to the church. Those who did not find their voices heard in the vote itself, specifically the ratio of men to women, or the outcome took to social media to express their discontent. One interesting form utilized during this time was the use of internet memes, in which pictures of Ellen G. White, comedy stars, movies, and women's suffrage were passed along with captions such as, "Lower your expectations," and "How long will we wait for President Wilson?".

The rapid advancements in technology and popularity of images have led to the creation of the meme. Though the memes themselves are just pictures, they are themselves a socially constructed form of discourse which should not be overlooked. In his book *Picture Theory: Essays on Verbal and Visual Representation*, William Mitchell writes, "We live in a culture of images... We are surrounded by pictures"

(Mitchell, 1994, p. 5). Pictures then are reflective of the culture in which they exist, whether they represent the dominant culture, or a resistance to the dominant culture.

The roots of the word “meme,” however, originate in Greek. It is derived from the Greek word *mimema*, signifying “something which is imitated.” Later, this was shortened by Richard Dawkins for his book *The Selfish Gene* in which he ascribed the term to any behavior, idea, or style, which spreads rapidly from person to person with a culture (Shifman, 1994, p. 363). One example would be the popularity of nursery rhymes which provide cultural meaning, and at times teach a culture’s social boundaries and moralizing truths. Within the past two decades or so, the term has been appropriated towards the development of the internet meme. Thus, in this context it is best to define a meme as “units of popular culture that are circulated, imitated, and transformed by individual Internet users, creating a shared cultural experience in the process” (Shifman, 1994, p. 367).

The use of memes then is a form of post-modern play in which some scholars suggest provide “structures of feeling” for emotive discourse (Szablewicz, 2014, p. 270). Understanding memes as structures of feelings underline their ability to portray both cultural and political information. Memes both shape and reflect popular culture. They are an expression of attitudes, beliefs, and/or mindsets. They can also represent a set of ideals for culture or the resulting disillusionment if these ideals are not achieved. Memes are also political in that they provide a means of making visible what has been invisible, often through the use of humor by blending the boundaries of religion, popular culture, and politics. They can often be a form of dissent of the culture of dominance. Memes then provide a way of reflecting the individual mindset which can be passed along to create a social environment. Their viral sensation provides a collective identity for the users which share them, creating a sort of “networked individualism,” or “collective individualism” (Soon & Kluver, 2014).

The significance of this generation of networks is the fluidity in which users can constantly negotiate their identity. The internet provides a space for public dissent in which the public atmosphere may not provide. The prolific trend of internet memes during the 2015 General Conference can then be analyzed as a

form of lived religion by Generation M. The idea of lived religion is an approach that sees religion as dynamic, experiential, and rooted in the daily life of its practitioners. Memes are invaluable because they provide personalized expressions of the religious. They can affirm one's religious identity in playful ways.

It is important, however, to understand the difference between religious memes and memes about religion. One such study on religious internet memes, conducted at Texas A&M University, defined memes about religion "focus on religion as a general construct with a tendency toward negative framings of religious beliefs, practices and traditions" (Bellar, Campbell, Cho, Terry, Tsuria, Yadlin-Segal, & Ziemer, 2013, p. 13). Religious memes, however, are generally specific towards a religious tradition or community, and they are often produced by individuals within the communities using humor to communicate "associated beliefs or rituals" (Bellar et al., 2013, p. 13). Perhaps then, it is important to consider memes as another manifestation of practicing the religious.

Rather than characterize those who engage in internet memes as irreligious or uninterested in spirituality, it becomes important to engage with the memes themselves. If the internet provides a space for Generation M to construct spiritual journeys, then these desires are also linked to the church. These desires can often be overlooked, especially in a worldwide church such as the Seventh-Day Adventist Church. Since managing religious diversity, as Lori Beaman suggests, is often achieved through tolerance and accommodation in policy changes, the nuances in daily life is often neglected (Beaman, 2014, p. 93). As a result, the public space has become riddled with negative stories as a response to this top down approach.

Memes, then, are a form of embodied religion, and people as a whole are not becoming less religious. Instead, they are becoming differently religious (Stuvland, 2010, p. 223). The virtual form then requires that in order to understand memes, one must orient oneself according to the mode in order to experience its message. Memes are relational messages in that the viewer, words, and images cannot be examined independently of one another. Isaiah 6:1-8 states that God's holiness is revealed throughout the whole earth. The failure to engage memes as a form of discourse is to disengage from the personal stories of

the church body as a whole, resulting in the inability to experience the fullness of God's glory and the preservation of the status quo established by religious and cultural majorities.

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EDUCATION AND THE GOSPEL COMMISSION

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The first class I took on my first day at attending Southern Adventist University was Human Rights & Services. The class was a balanced combination of the gospel commission and entrepreneurial social change. I remember leaving class that day with a feeling of peace, I was excited about the education I was going to receive here; I was confident that although theory and practice had its rightful place, the gospel was not lost in the process. I had come to Southern to receive an education to empower myself to help make a difference in the world. That first class has continued to shape my experience at Southern. This is the story of how it has.

Another beautiful day in Harare, Zimbabwe had dawned winter of 2009. I was 20 years old, fresh and ready to make my stamp on the world. I would be volunteering at an orphanage in the heart of the country teaching children, and in many ways acting as a parent they never had. At this time, Zimbabwe was going through political upheaval and just starting to recover from a dangerous cholera epidemic. Suffering was everywhere; it was normal to see it just a part of everyday life. There was just no place to begin or end in meeting needs; there was no ending to this suffering. I had seen this before on my travels, but now I was living it.

One peaceful night, as the big African sunset in the west, there was a terrible noise. Tires squealed, and metal scraped against the pavement, for what seemed like eternity. It was one of the sounds that you hear and know instantly that something is very wrong. I ran to the scene and found people all over the road, some motionless, some sitting up, others crying out in pain. A truck with 16 people had flipped while escaping from the police. . I ran to get the first aid kit and with the help of others, we began the process of helping those we could. A little over an hour, the ambulance finally arrived. I do not remember much from

that night, I was in a state of shock as some of the victims. But, what I do remember and will never forget, is a young boy looking at me and pleading for me to help him over and over again. Yet, I could do nothing.

Four long years later as I sat in Global Politics class studying political theory and global issues in today's world, I was fascinated to learn better ways to solve all the suffering I had seen. When I left class that day, I realized possibly the greatest truth I had ever learned in higher education, it was a simple one: only Jesus can solve these problems in the world. That was it. All this theory, all this knowledge could make only a small difference, but not a lasting one. It was a pivotal thought because I realized that all the policy, all the readings and even the greatest men of our time, could not save the world.

I had always known the answer was Christ, but I experienced a paradigm shift in my life when I began to think of what that actually means. In the book *Education*, Ellen White writes, "To obtain an education worthy of the name, we must receive a knowledge of God, the Creator, and of Christ, the Redeemer, as they are revealed in the sacred word."⁴ The Biblical approach to education is what has helped build my faith at Southern. Although my classes have been taught with the highest degree of academic excellence, the greatest benefit I have received is a deeper knowledge of God and his word.

This past summer, I applied for and accepted an internship in an agriculture and community development program. I had taken a class in sustainability studies here at Southern and with some previous knowledge, I felt this would be a unique opportunity to sharpen my skills. The internship involved maintaining a community garden and educating high school students who were completing community service hours. Since I was working for the city and state, I could not openly talk about faith or a relationship with God; what I could do was act like Him.

Acting like Christ is no easy task for any of us including myself, but I have found that prayer works wonders in the lives of those who pray and those who are prayed for. Prayer is an education within itself. Did not the disciples ask to be taught how to pray? During my four weeks working with the students, I was

⁴White, Ellen Gould Harmon. "Source and Aim of True Education." In *Education*. Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Association, 1952.

never really able to talk openly about faith. But questions of life came up and it is surprising how deep conversations can go when you are sitting in the hot sun pulling weeds with someone you have just met. I think we forget that loving others as Christ loved us is educating others about him. Francis of Assisi once said:

"...As for me, I desire this privilege from the Lord, that never may I have any privilege from man, except to do reverence to all, and to convert the world by obedience to the Holy Rule rather by example than by word."⁵

As I look back at the classes that I have taken here at Southern, each one has helped me be a better person, more knowledgeable about life and why I am here. I have been able to use this knowledge overseas and in this state to help others. Education that is Christ-centered and contextualized in a holistic way can only benefit the learner and the world. I am taking my final Global Policy and Service Studies class this semester. The class is Policy on Global Health; it is, of course, investigating policy and thoughts on approaches to health care throughout the world. The class has started like all others, with Christ. We have looked at His mission, His methods, and His policies on health. Each lecture is well prepared and powerfully delivered to make the learning experience practical to the problems the world faces today.

The world has some serious problems today, and I believe in a little while we are going home. There is still work to do, of course. Education is key to the proclamation of the third angel's message; we need a generation of men and women to live and teach the gospel calling the world out of a false system of education into a relationship with Christ. Every department on campus has a job to do, one thing we know about God is that he is "no respecter of persons (Acts 10:34) ." Just as the Biology Department trains students to become doctors and scientists to bring healing and new discoveries into the world, he uses the History and Political Science Department to think of new strategies and policies. New methods to bring hope where there is none, a better policy to fight injustice, and new laws that will shape world events. In my

⁵ Arpin-Ricci, Jamie. "Preach the Gospel at All Times?" The Huffington Post. July 1, 2012. Accessed September 6, 2015.

opinion, every student that leaves this school has the opportunity and education to do great things whether he is operating a business stateside or doing eye surgery in the mountains of Tibet.

In closing, I would like to share with you two verses from Ecclesiastes, penned from the wisest man that has ever lived, King Solomon. His life's thoughts are summed up in this book, and it was written as almost an apology of sorts to a wasted life, a life seeking for things that cannot be found:

“And further, by these, my son, be admonished: of making many books there is no end, and much study is a weariness of the flesh. Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man.”⁶

I want to say that even with all I have learned from my assigned book work and studies from Anthropology to American Foreign Policy, the most relevant education that I have received and continued to receive here at school is a fear of God. This “fear of God is the beginning of wisdom (Proverbs 9:10) ” and is not this the greatest human right that all are entitled to receive?

⁶ Ecclesiastics 12:12, 13

FAITH AND POLITICS

Colton Adams

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"The purpose of life is not to be happy. It is to be useful, to be honorable, to be compassionate, to have it make some difference that you have lived and lived well." – Ralph Waldo Emerson

Who, why, what, and how? These four simple questions are vital to defining the human experience. Who is our leader, or motivation? Why are we called to action? What are we doing about it? And how are we doing it?

While history has been fundamental to my understanding of the legal and political mechanisms that shape society, my faith in Jesus Christ has been the enduring foundation that forms my overall worldview. As witnessed through the life of Jesus, this worldview appreciates the value of the individual, and recognizes the significant power one has to make a difference. Though people take different paths in order to reach their goals, my deep interests in history and politics have allowed me a unique avenue through which I am pushing to become an agent for change.

Faith and Interests

Admittedly, despite not being my initial major in college, history was my first academic passion. Growing up I developed a deep interest in knowing why things in society were the way they were. Furthermore, I just loved knowing random historical facts. However, history's importance is so much more than a mere collection of dates and "facts." It is far more than the often repeated, and frequently misunderstood, phrase, "without studying history, we are doomed to repeat the same mistakes." History is the foundation upon which all current events rest. It is an intricate web of collective memory that forms the context of human progress, international affairs, and the laws which form modern civil society. The

unequivocal relevance of individuals, cultures, and nations, upon past events can hardly be overstated—especially from a faith-based perspective.

As people of faith, it is especially important to understand why we believe what we believe. It is not enough merely to accept all things at face value, to walk through life without understanding some of the basic concepts that we proclaim shape our beliefs. It is particularly important for young people of faith to know where they stand when entering into the workforce. The unfortunate truth is this: without knowing why, we are utterly doomed to inaction. Knowing “why” we hold certain beliefs not only allows us to confidently communicate, but it also strengthens the ability to act. My years at Southern Adventist University assisted me immeasurably in developing the skills necessary to make my goals a reality, and those skills were further honed through my experiences in state government.

I quickly learned this when I began my first internship working at the Tennessee State Archives, and as a public policy analyst for the Tennessee Secretary of State. As with any new task, I was challenged in ways that I had never been before; all the foundational skills and knowledge that had been obtained over the years was put to the test as I delved into various projects. At the Archives, for instance, I used my analytical skills to clean, organize, and document legislative papers from the Tennessee General Assembly of the 1830s, and cases heard by the Tennessee Supreme Court in the 1910s. Interestingly enough, I found a wide variety of bills that ranged from attempting to create the new states of Frankland & Jacksoniana, to a bill by then-State Senator Andrew Johnson to make Knoxville the official state capitol of Tennessee.

As a policy analyst for Secretary of State Tre Hargett, my duties required much more communication than at the Archives, and an equal capacity to effectively analyze information. Some of the many duties included reading through and summarizing key points of documents in order to brief the Secretary prior to meetings. I attended various state funding and investment meetings. I also had to answer phones and direct people to the proper departments based on their problems. Most importantly, however, I was responsible for researching various proposals and making recommendations based on my findings by presenting them to the Secretary and several Cabinet members.

Over the course of my time at the Department of State, one of the major projects that another intern and I focused on were ways to better encourage civics and foster a growing awareness of the State's history to an increasingly apathetic generation. We spent weeks contacting Secretaries of State, or their state-equivalents, and nonprofit civics organizations in all fifty states to see what they were doing to strengthen accessibility to vital information. We compiled pages and pages of information from each state and rated them on effectiveness, ease-of-access, and even appearance. By the end of the summer, our proposal included a long list of ideas like teacher workshops, student-days on the Hill, accessible teaching information from the State Department's website, virtual museum projects, and online civics games. Much to my delight and surprise, some of the concepts in our civic proposal proved to be very successful. Today, partially because of the work of two interns, teachers have online access to various lesson plans and civic information from the Tennessee Virtual Archive and TSLA Online Exhibits. Thus, hard work from small people can make big changes.

Much like my time at the Department of State, I was given another exceptional opportunity my last semester at Southern by interning at the Tennessee General Assembly. At the state legislature, I worked as a legislative intern for a moderate representative from Knoxville, who also served as the Chairman of the House Calendar & Rules Committee. Calendar & Rules is a powerful committee that serves as the gateway from the committee process to the House floor for final debate. Thus, as the legislative intern for this Committee, I received a detailed exposure to the nature of bills going to the House floor, as well as an understanding of the actions necessary to get them passed. Each day, I was responsible for tracking all House bills through the committee-process, as well as briefing the Chairman on all the bills that made it to his committee. These briefings also included details about the intensity of debate on them, and key supporters, and any fiscal impacts that were attached.

Fortunately, due to the hard work and effort put forth while I was there, the Chairman was able to run a smooth Committee, and an efficient office. Our work did not go unnoticed. The Chairman – a devout Catholic, knowing I was a Seventh - day Adventist – mentioned my character one day, noting the

impression that I had left in the office. As a Christian working in the public sector, it is difficult to witness through words – which makes it the perfect place to witness through actions. Matthew 7:20 says, “By their fruits you will know them.” Thus, in many ways God’s greatest outreach tool is through the molding of our character.

Conclusion

Admittedly, I was not vigorously engaged in religious affairs during my internships. I did not attempt to share the explicit words of the Gospel to those around, but rather I shared the implicit life of the Gospel through my character and desire to help. We are called to be a light in the darkness of this world. However, without knowing our “why,” we will never know our call to action. For people of faith, this “why” can only be answered by first beginning with the *Who*; and for me that is Jesus Christ. *Why?* Christ’s life was one that made a constant difference around those around Him, whether by healing the hurt, or encouraging the weak – thus His example has fortified my *What*, which is a persistent desire to be a difference maker. *How?* By utilizing the gifts and interests God has given me, through my work in various public and private atmospheres.

He calls some to remote villages to share their faith; others to become doctors, attorneys, and businessmen. Regardless of our specific calling, God has blessed us each with our own individual abilities and awarded us with the potential to be a witness through our actions.

This world can be cruel. With one click of a button, we can easily see testaments of the struggles that burden people all across the world. Unfortunately, the rise of the 24-hour news cycle, as beneficial as it can be, has made it very easy to be pessimistic about life on Earth. However, all it takes is one person to make a difference. Fred Rogers, the host of *Mr. Rogers’ Neighborhood*, once said, “When I was a boy and I would see scary things in the news, my mother would say to me, ‘Look for the helpers. You will always find people who are helping.’” God has blessed me with a deep interest and growing understanding for history and politics. Consequently, fueling a passion to help, which has been fortified by my faith.

NO NEED FOR SHAME

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When I began graduate school in London, fall 2012, I was looking forward to breaking free from my roots in Adventist education. I loved the history department here at Southern, but I felt like the university saw the humanities, especially history, as a subject whose merit was only found when studied in conjunction with something else “more useful.” I looked forward to going somewhere the study of history would be celebrated for its own merit. As my MA started, I found myself frustrated and embarrassed by my liberal arts degree earned from a small, religious university in the southern United States (U.S.). England does not have liberal arts degrees, thus many of my peers had taken sometimes double the number of history courses as I had, and I felt behind. I was afraid the fact that my degree came from a religious university, and that I myself am a Christian, would cause my professors and peers to not take me seriously as a scholar. Western Europe views religion and religious people differently than most of the U.S. does. Upon beginning my graduate degree, I quickly picked up on the blatant hostility often expressed by professors and peers alike concerning devoutly religious people. I did not want them to see me in that light, so I avoided mentioning where I graduated (if I could), and brought up religion or religious topics as little as possible my first term. I only had one class, where we examined how we study history, so my avoidance technique worked quite well. My second term, however, did not quite work out that way.

One of the modules I took that second term was about medical practitioners and their patients during the late Middle-Ages and into the early modern period. We read from a lot of journals, letters, and other personal papers. One week we read a large excerpt from the diary of an English woman, in which she talks about her life in general and the various physical ailments she suffered from. As I began reading, I quickly realized that this woman had woven quotes from Song of Solomon into her diary entries. As she

documented her life, both the mundane day-to-day as well as deeper musings about life and God, she spliced in direct quotes sometimes a sentence or two and sometimes whole passages into her writing. I recognized it right away and began marking every incidence I saw, confident I would be prepared when it were brought up in the class discussion.

The next class period, we all went around discussing various themes or ideas we found particularly interesting, yet, no one brought up the quotes from the Bible. I was determined not to bring them up until someone else did. Then my professor began talking about the women's religious faith, citing her references to Jesus as the Great Physician, whom she believed could heal her. I saw my opening and piped up with my observation about how she not only referenced the Bible, but quoted from it directly, many times, and from a specific book. No one, including my professor, had realized she had quoted chunks of scripture in her entries, let alone known what book of the Bible those quotes were from. My face flushed. I could not believe no one else had recognized these sections as quotes from the Bible. That is when I realized the fact that I did know had signaled to those in my class that I likely had an intimate knowledge of Scripture. One of my classmates, who was in a few other classes with me, asked, "Didn't you go to a religious university?" Still blushing furiously, I answered affirmatively. "Is that why you were able to recognize all of these quotes?" he asked, then laughed. "I guess I should have paid more attention in church!" Everyone laughed, the teacher thanked me for my insight, and the discussion moved on.

The moment I had been dreading since I started my degree had happened, and I was sure the respect and rapport I had developed with my peers and professors in the previous months had been irrevocably damaged. As the weeks went by, however, I came to see that was not the case at all. In fact, I began to realize that yes, the hostility to religion and religious people was real within academia, but being ashamed of who I was and where I came from helped no one, including myself. This had caused me to hide what was, in many ways, my greatest source of both personal and academic strength. In fact, as the class proceeded and I pointed out another Biblical references in a separate reading, it spawned a lengthy discussion, with my professor quipping that it was good someone had listened to their Bible teacher. I became bolder in my other

classes as well, not holding back when I made a connection to Biblical imagery, phrases, or beliefs, even though I knew it would signal to others my own Christian background and upbringing.

As I grew less concerned with hiding my faith, I began to appreciate it more. My personal faith and belief gave me comfort and peace during a difficult time in my life, and the knowledge gained through a life lived in a community built around that faith, including my Adventist schooling, gave me a knowledge base that proved a distinct advantage as a historian of early modern England and colonial America. The early modern period in Western Europe and the American colonies was a time where culture at every level of society was saturated with Christianity. Whether an individual was sincere in their beliefs was almost irrelevant, as Christianity and the Bible fundamentally shaped every segment of culture, including language, and my familiarity with both the Bible and living within a Christian community was a knowledge base not shared by most of my peers.

My faith is not and has never been a weakness. Attending Adventist academies and university did not hobble me academically out in the “real world”, as I feared it would. In fact, my faith and the knowledge I have learned because of it, has become an invaluable asset in my chosen field of academic study. That year instilled in me a deep-rooted appreciation for my years at Southern. I do still think the humanities is incredibly underappreciated as a discipline within Adventist education, but I came away from graduate school with a renewed appreciation for what I gained here. Not only were the things I learned invaluable to my success after leaving, but I have gained mentors that have encouraged me, given valuable advice, written reference letters, and made time for me. Those personal connections have never felt as comforting as they did that year. I know Adventists can be outstanding historians as well as involved and passionate members of their church because people who embody those qualities inhabit the history department here at Southern.

History is my life’s passion; studying it and trying to infect those around me with, if not love, then appreciation for it is what I hope to do with the rest of my life. Ideally, I would love to accomplish this as a university professor, but even if that particular dream does not come to fruition, I know that whatever I do,

in whatever way I contribute to the communities I live in, my love of history and the faith that directs and shapes that love, will be at its center.

LANGAUGES: A GATEWAY TO GLOBAL& CELESTIAL CITIZENSHIP

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During the year that I was in my second year of my secondary level of education, attending Portland Union Academy, Portland, OR, the school hosted a Week of Prayer. At one point during the week-long event, there was an invitation to commit to being a missionary. I made the decision to accept this challenge, which meant a career decision, as well. I spoke with a counselor; whereupon, I committed myself to becoming a nurse. Having made this decision, when I entered college, nursing was my career goal. During my first semester at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, I registered for a botany course, which I found quite intriguing and engaging, with respect to knowledge acquisition; however, it became clear to me that I did not wish to spend the remainder of my life working “behind a microscope”.

Having come to the conclusion that sciences were not my field of academic interest, the question was, “What am I going to do to prepare myself to be a missionary?” “What options are open to me, as a female, to be a missionary, if I do not pursue the “obvious” career choice for a future of missionary-directed life choices? “As it turned out, the answer to these two questions did not come until about eight years later; however, the answer to the question of what my academic trajectory was going to look like, came the second semester of my freshman year of college.

Due to having spent six years in Mexico, as a child and an adolescent, when I took the entrance exams to enter UNC, I placed in Spanish III on the language placement exam. Having placed in Spanish III, I enrolled in this course in the spring semester of my first year of college. Because of her demeanor, willingness to assist her students, positive attitude, helpfulness, and availability, I made the decision during that semester to pursue a degree in secondary education, with licensure in Spanish; because of my desire to

emulate, Dr. Bensley, my Spanish professor. But, the unrequited query remained, how I can fulfill my commitment to God and man to become a missionary, with a Spanish major.

As frequently happens in our walk as Christians, the answers that we are seeking do not come when we demand them of God, they come when God knows that is best, and when we are ready to participate in His life plan for us. For me, the answer came when I had already completed my undergraduate studies, and had completed my Master of Arts coursework in Spanish-American literature and comprehensive exams, and was preparing to write my master's thesis.

The professor that taught the graduate level Survey of Spanish literature I & II was married to a Spaniard. He and his wife owned property in Valencia, Spain; therefore, they travelled to Spain on a regular basis. During the year that I finished my master's level coursework, Dr. Alva Ebersole and his wife Carmen, decided to develop and establish an exchange program with the University of Seville, Spain. The program was designed to provide the language students from UNC with an opportunity to study abroad during their junior year of their studies. Due to the fact that I was in the process of completing my master's level courses, I sought, and was granted permission, to study at the university, pursuing coursework relevant to my degree, obtaining a minor in Spanish literature. This decision was the vehicle through which God would teach me that it does not matter what one's career path is, one can be a missionary for God.

The first week that I was in Seville, Spain, I sought out the Seventh-day Adventist Church⁷; whereupon, I discovered that there were only 28 baptized members of the local church in a city of approximately 500,000 inhabitants. The church was involved in a weekly door-to-door visitation program, on Sabbath afternoons. Being fluent in Spanish, I readily accepted the invitation to be part of the outreach program. During the year that I remained a student at the University of Seville, I continued to participate in this weekly program.

⁷ In the remainder of the article this institution is referred to as the SDA Church.

Additionally, a month after I arrived in Seville, I met the individual who was to become member #29 of the Seville SDA Church, and later my husband. His having chosen to become an SDA member later led to his parents being baptized and establishing a church in the city of Logroño, Spain, a city that prior to their planting this new church had never had any SDA presence, in addition to having two Catholic monasteries. We later established a Spanish-speaking church in Richmond, VA, being a city where there are now six Spanish-speaking churches in the greater metropolitan area.

How can one witness in a public/private institution?

After my children started school, I discovered another means through which my language skills would serve as a means of outreach. I accepted employment as an Adjunct Professor in Spanish at J Sargeant Reynolds Community College, Richmond, VA, where I taught for 10 years before returning to the University of North Carolina – Chapel Hill, to obtain my Ph.D. in Romance Languages. In the process of preparing my lessons for my classes I came to understand that, due to its rich political and religious heritage, Spanish offers countless opportunities to witness without stepping outside the boundaries of the policies of instruction at a state-owned or private institution of higher learning.

The mining of the rich resources for witnessing became very intriguing to me. As I explored the fountains of possibilities, I came to understand that as a Christian it is my responsibility to seek God's wisdom to share His truth with others. Matthew 10:16: "...wise as serpents, and harmless as doves"⁸ garnered new meaning for me. Being a "missionary" does not necessarily denote a profession, it is a mindset. Good judgment and stepping into the gap is the key, not carrying a title or holding a position. Witnessing is a lifestyle and a life-work, not a position of employment that one picks up at the employer's door. Testifying for Christ, if it is going to be genuine and far-reaching is the way one lives and conducts oneself.

I will never forget the opportunity that I had to experience this in my daily contact with a student. It was the one year that I taught at a state institution, as a Visiting Professor. I was not aware of the fact that

⁸ The English-language Scripture references in this presentation are drawn from the King James Version of the Bible, unless otherwise indicated.

when the students graduate each one has the opportunity to indicate the professor that has had the most impact on their life. I had this student in my class the final semester of their senior year of their undergraduate career and she stated that I was the professor that had impacted her life the most, having had her for only a brief period of time and her having studied at that university for four years. To me it was quite significant that God had given the privilege of making a difference for this student. This experience emphasized to me that we never know who is being touched by what we do, what we say, how we treat the individuals we come in contact with, or what people are observing. The challenge is ominous; however, the rewards are eternal.

How does one witness at a denominational institution?

The most obvious, but perhaps overlooked channel of conveyance is the devotional at the beginning of each class period, exam, group or university activity, Bible study groups, vespers, or convocation.

This opportunity might be “overlooked” in the sense of spiritual enrichment that is strategically chosen to feed the soul, strengthen the daily life, and draw attention to the All-powerful source of wisdom, knowledge, and understanding that is available to the human race. If verses are selected with a message of encouragement they can have a significant impact on the students, to the extent of facilitating eternal decisions. “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom” (Proverbs 1:7) takes on a point of practical application. Or, the text from James 1:5 “If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.”

Additionally, the vehicle of the Scripture/prayer moments of a class may facilitate a time of noting discreet points of grammar, syntax, literary structure, or orthography. Let us consider Solomon’s verse for the student or the academician: Proverbs 1:2 “To know wisdom and instruction; to perceive the words of understanding....” In other words, God’s word is a source of elucidation. God’s word does not only provide “biblical” awareness of the parade of “illustrious”, or perhaps, not so outstanding Bible characters, it opens the door to much information of a practical, daily, application-begging wisdom, being at the heart of instruction and knowledge acquisition.

But, perhaps of greater significance might be the “silent” witness that the professor presents on an ongoing basis. It is paramount that pedagogues impart intellectual enrichment and enhancement, alongside of moral, ethical, and value-focused perspectives on life, when working with students. There is an ongoing mentorship of a professional and personal development that is being forged by the educator. Henry B. Adams has said: “A teacher affects eternity, he/ [she] can never tell where his/her influence stops.”⁹ In the book *Christian Education*, p. 199 Ellen G. White¹⁰ has said: “The opening of God’s word is followed by remarkable strengthening of man’s faculties; for the entrance of God’s word is the application of divine truth to the heart, purifying and refining the soul through the agency of the Holy Spirit.” Spiritual matters are not limited to the divine realm, they transcend one’s entire life.

As an educator one must constantly be cognizant of the life-changing and life-giving responsibility that one has as one interacts diurnally with those with whom one comes in contact. We must “walk-the-walk”, as well as, “talk-the-talk.” A certain percentage of students come to a Seventh-day Adventist institution having already made a decision concerning religious matters, and are continuing in their spiritual growth process; however, there are those that have not made a decision at all. There are those that are seeking, those that have lost their way for various reasons, and those whose parents have persuaded their offspring to attend, with a prayer in their heart and on their lips that the Holy Spirit will be able to reach their child to begin to make more positive decisions and reverse the course that they are on, to personal destruction and perdition, and an uncharted future. The educator’s role as a faculty member is much more far-reaching than “textbooks” and subject-matter.

⁹ Henry Brooks Adams (February 16, 1838 – March 27, 1918) was a U.S. historian, journalist, novelist and educator. He was the great-grandson of John Adams, grandson of John Quincy Adams and son of Charles Francis Adams, Sr.

¹⁰ Ellen Gould Harmon White, born November 26, 1827; died July 16, 1915, a woman of remarkable spiritual gifts, lived most of her life during the 19th C., yet through her writings she continues to be a life-changing force on generations of people around the world. During her lifetime she wrote more than 5,000 periodical articles and 40 books; but today, including compilations from her 50,000 pages of manuscript, more than 100 titles are available in English. She is the most translated woman writer in the entire history of literature, and the most translated American author of either gender. . . .

Specific examples of how a language is a “gateway” to global citizenship.

At the beginning of each one of my classes I have a brief time for Scripture and prayer. The first and second class periods of each semester I provide these to the class. I seek to set the tone of the semester through a Scripture that offers wisdom, hope, and encouragement, such as: Philippians 4:13: “I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.”¹¹ Upon writing the Scripture on the board both in English and Spanish, I then have the whole class repeat the verse in Spanish, following my reading and modeling the pronunciation. I then share with the class my personal testimony concerning the meaning of the text. Following the Scripture devotional, I ask the students for any prayer requests or praises that they may have to share. Following the class participation segment of the class worship, I share a bilingual prayer with the class.

The second class period I pass around a paper for the Scripture reading and a paper for the prayer, with all of the dates for the semester. Depending on the number of students enrolled in the class, I designate how many times each student is to participate throughout the semester; whereupon, they choose the dates when they will be the presenter for the day. The student then chooses his/her text for the day, rehearses the pronunciation if needed (I offer the student this opportunity to work with me if they desire or deem it necessary; because, I wish to assure success, confidence, and trust from the onset of the class.¹²), and then writes the text on the board on their scheduled date, shares their thoughts concerning the text, and has the class pronounce the text with them.

One of the texts that has brought the most interesting reaction, and the most conversation is “Jesus wept” John 11:35 (“Jesús lloró” Juan 11:35), due to its brevity. I have had some very thought-provoking experiences with this Scripture. One student came to class on the day that it was their turn to share the

¹¹ The Fall, 2015 semester, at Southern Adventist University, I chose this text as the theme verse for the semester; challenging the students to memorize this verse, enabling them to access the verse no matter where they might find themselves, and whatever circumstances they might be facing. At the end of the semester I asked for a show of hands of who had memorized the verse; whereupon, one student responded, “I do not remember the whole verse; however, I do remember the word ‘*puedo*’”. My response to the student, and the whole class to their remembering the word “can”, was, you have remembered the most important word from the Scripture.

¹² No matter what level of Spanish class I am teaching, whether it be beginning, first semester elementary, or an advanced upper-division class, this is my process for the participation of my students in this portion of the class activities.

Scripture, having chosen this verse. They wrote the verse up on the board; at which point there were several snickers from the class. He wrote it and looked at me kind of sheepishly, revealing his “original” objective to present a verse that is short and “uncomplicated”. I, of course, asked him why he chose this verse, fully aware of what his intention had been.

This occurrence offered a teachable moment of digging deeper into the word of God and coming to the realization that God’s Word has a depth and breadth that is inexhaustible that can be applied to our daily lives and enrich our very existence. When we realize that Jesus Christ suffered just as we do. He experienced pain in the same manner as we do. He had emotions, just as we do; Our Savior, this student’s Redeemer, became a human being for him; Someone to whom he could relate. He was touched personally, at a level that was unfamiliar to him prior to this event.

The second occasion was one day when a student, who was supposed to have the text for the day, did not attend class. So, an alternate verse was chosen and written on the board. A certain student was not satisfied with the verse; because, he said that that Scripture had been presented previously; therefore, he was requesting an alternate. Whereupon, I chose “Jesus wept”. He then scoffed at the choice and called into question the wisdom of this selection. I proceeded to “mine” the richness of the verse, which then caused him to reflect on what God’s Word has to offer.

“Jesus wept”, with its depth and breadth of meaning and enlightenment, is an example of one of those texts that responds to the following Holy-Spirit inspired statement by Jeremiah: Jeremiah 33:3: “Call unto me, and I will answer thee, and show thee great and mighty things, which thou knowest not”, being a text that I have utilized to enable the students to realize that God is the source for answers. This verse reveals to us that God wishes for us to depend on Him and to realize that He not only can answer our prayers and our petitions, He has power and strength to do things that we might not even imagine.

Revelation 22:13 is the final example that I wish to offer, amongst the innumerable resources that the Holy Scriptures offer. “I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last.” This text, aside from the expansiveness of meaning that is found within these brief words, offers an example of a

verse that one can read in Spanish and because of the cognates does not need to be translated to garner its meaning. I use this Scripture to encourage my students to reach beyond what they specifically aware of what they know and come to understand that they can comprehend more than they think they can through the similarities that can be discerned from one language to another.

What does literature offer for sharing the gospel?

Due to the fact that the Roman Catholic Church is the official religious institution, and is a dominant factor throughout all sectors of society in Spanish-speaking countries, Spanish-language literature is replete with Biblical allusions and imagery, whether it be references to Biblical characters, mentions of events, or some other example of what can be found in the Bible. The fact that the literature abounds with Scriptural material affords the opportunity to bring God's Word to the classroom, whether denominational or non-denominational. In an SDA institution Biblical principles and academia are partnered in a natural "marriage". On the other hand, in a state-owned or private institution of higher learning, proselytization is prohibited; therefore, an alternate vehicle presents itself through the religious heritage of Spanish-speaking countries. The study of a given text offers occasions for drawing attention to Biblical connections in an academic context. "Preaching" is not appropriate; however, drawing on the references offers the "natural" prospect to draw attention to the references and the pursuit of meaning. Below are two examples of such instances.

The first example that is of interest to consider is from a work entitled Doña Bárbara written by Rómulo Ángel del Monte Carmelo Gallegos Freire (1884-1969), a schoolteacher, writer, journalist, Minister of Public Education, Venezuelan president, member of the Venezuelan Academy of Language. The author's technique exemplifies the concept of utilizing literary works to focus on the union of higher education and spiritual matters:

**Barbarita* Guaimarán – The given name "little barbarian", being used as a term of endearment, which is characteristic of Spanish language usage. This female character epitomizes the traits of an individual who exhibits evil at her very

essence. Barbaric traits are what define her behavior and actions. Immorality is delineated through her approach to life.

**Santos* Luzardo – The given name meaning “holy”. This individual exhibits good in actions and influence and at the end of the novel is instrumental in forging a transformation for good in Barbarita. He defines constructive character traits.

**Guillermo Danger* – The surname speaks for itself. This name was used for an individual who came to Venezuela as a foreigner and was taking advantage of the country and its people. This individual is characterized as the epitome of what might be done by American citizens in a foreign country, according to the characterization of the author.

**Altamira* – The name of a location that means the “high view”, meaning a perspective above that which is lowly. This is the name of the place where Santos Luzardo resided. Being a station in life to which one aspires to rise above the “ordinary”. In other words, “taking the high road” in life.

As can be noted, the names of places and of characters are used to draw one to consider moral and ethical issues. Living morally and uprightly are at the very heart and essence of this work. Good and evil are compared and contrasted, with virtues being exalted above malevolence. Evil is to be overcome by good. The second example comes from an excerpt from the Chilean poet, educator, and diplomat, Gabriela Mistral (1889-1957), from her poem, “La oración de la maestro”:

Dame el ser más madre que las madres, para poder amar y defender como ellas lo que no es carne de mis carnes. Dame que alcance a hacer de una de mis niñas mi

verso perfecto y a dejarte en ella clavada mi más penetrante melodía, para cuando mis labios no canten más.¹³

The teacher is asking God to give her love for her pupils to the point that she will constantly bear in mind the unending impact that she has on her students. But, the prayer does not stop there, she is begging of God that she would always keep in mind that her influence does not cease when the student leaves her classroom; the effect continues to persist far beyond the student being under her tutelage; it continues even after the educator has died. In other words, it is paramount that educators bear in mind that the impact on students is much more far-reaching than can be imagined. A Christian educator has an awesome privilege and responsibility, which must always be borne in mind. By inference, this notion must be extended to each individual who chooses to adopt the title of Christian. Each one has an obligation to not only assume a label, but there is commitment to espouse the ideology and philosophy inherent in this designation.

The third example comes from Esteban Echevarria (1805-1851), an Argentinian poet, fiction writer, cultural promoter, and political activist. This fragment comes from his work entitled “El matadero”.¹⁴ This story draws heavily from the Biblical description of the flood relying heavily upon the lessons that can be drawn from the recount of the flood, such as warnings, judgment, and salvation. The reader must note that there are allusions to the fact that due to divine anger there is a judgment to come, which is being espoused by the religious leaders of the time, just as Noah did during the time of construction of the ark. Noah is named along with the Ark, accompanied by the process of the Flood being the framework for the happenings in this author’s portrayal of the political climate of Argentina at the time of his writing. This sampling elucidates the content of this work:

¹³ “The teacher’s prayer:

“Let me be more mother than the mother herself in my love and defense of the child who is not flesh of my flesh. Help me to make one of my children my most perfect poem, and leave within him or her my most melodious melody from that day when my own lips no longer sing.”

¹⁴ “The Slaughterhouse” was written during 1839 & 1840; however, was published posthumously in 1871, due to the inflammatory nature of the subject matter.

A pesar de que la mía es historia, no la empezaré por el arca de Noé y la genealogía de sus ascendientes como acostumbraban hacerlo los antiguos historiadores españoles de América, que deben ser nuestros prototipos. Tengo... Los predicadores atronaban el templo y hacían crujir el púlpito a puñetazos. Es el día del juicio, decían, el fin del mundo está por venir. La cólera divina rebosando se derrama en inundación.¹⁵

Biblical subject-matter serves as the conduit for presenting a highly critical assessment of the government, government officials, and the political situation of the author's country. This type of scenario provides multiple occasions for reviewing the various Biblical references.

This quote offers an additional snapshot of the content of this work, in which the reader can capture an understanding of the richness with which this work draws upon Biblical references:

! Ay de vosotros, pecadores! ¡Ay de vosotros unitarios impíos que os mofáis de la Iglesia, de los santos, y no escucháis con veneración la palabra de los ungidos del Señor! ¡Llegará la hora tremenda del vano crujir de dientes y de las frenéticas imprecaciones. Vuestra impiedad, vuestras herejías, vuestras blasfemias, vuestros crímenes horrendos, han traído sobre nuestra tierra las plagas del Señor.¹⁶

In this passage we find references to “sinners”, “infidels”, “the gnashing of teeth”, “iniquity”, “heresy”, “blasphemy”, & plagues of the Lord. With those type of Scriptural terminology being part of the text, one can ask where are these types of terms found in the Bible? What do these phrases and words tell us about the environment in which Echevarría lived? Why did the author choose to describe “his world” in this manner? Time allowing the opportunities for seeking of richness of meaning is infinite. In these

¹⁵ Despite the fact that I am writing history, I shall not copy the early Spanish chroniclers of America, who are held up to us as models, and go back to Noah's ark and the generations of his family. The preachers thundered in the temple and caused the pulpit to creak when they banged on them with their fist. They were saying that it is the Day of Judgment and the end of the world is about to come. Divine wrath is overflowing and is being poured out in the form of a flood.

¹⁶ Oh, you sinners! Oh, you Unitarian heathens that mock the church, the saints, and do not listen with veneration to the words of the anointed of the Lord. ... The terrible day of the futile gnashing of teeth and the frenzied cursing will come. Your iniquity, your heresies, your blasphemy, your horrendous crimes, have brought the Lord's plagues upon our land.

instances one must seek the leading of the Holy Spirit and God's leading as to what should be shared. Only the Lord knows the hearts and facilitates open doors to share the gospel.

Curriculum Content Methods: Languages.

One of the most captivating scenarios that has presented itself was in my Curriculum Content Methods class for Modern Languages. One day, my student who was seeking her Teacher Licensure for a modern language presented the following text for the class devotional: "My friends, we should not all try to become teachers. In fact, teachers will be judged more strictly than others. All of us do many wrong things. But if you can control your tongue, you are mature and able to control your whole body. (CEV¹⁷) Being alternately presented with the following version of the Bible: "Not many of you should become teachers, my fellow believers, because you know that we who teach will be judged more strictly. We all stumble in many ways. Anyone who is never at fault in what they say is perfect, able to keep their whole body in check." (NIV¹⁸) These texts are found in James 3:1-2. ¹⁹

This Scripture reading offered the class the chance to reflect on the seriousness of their chosen profession. The significance of their career choice became a matter of the leading of the Holy Spirit, rather than, "what I want to do with my life." Design became part of what one chooses to do, rather than simply "happening into "what one is doing with one's life. Also, the consideration of the appropriateness of one's personal characteristics became a point of interest. Career calling was a point of conversation for these students.

¹⁷ The Contemporary English Version of the Bible.

¹⁸ New International Version of the Bible.

¹⁹ This Scripture reading was presented to the class in both Spanish and French, due to the fact that there were students seeking Teaching Licensure in both of these languages. The texts read as follows:

Spanish -

Hermanos míos, no os hagáis maestros muchos *de vosotros*, sabiendo que recibiremos un juicio más severo. Porque todos tropezamos de muchas maneras. Si alguno no tropieza en lo que dice, es un hombre perfecto, capaz también de refrenar todo el cuerpo. (LBLA) Santiago 3:1-2.

French -

Mes frères, qu'il n'y ait pas parmi vous un grand nombre de personnes qui se mettent à enseigner, car vous savez que nous serons jugés plus sévèrement. Nous bronchons tous de plusieurs manières. Si quelqu'un ne bronche point en paroles, c'est un homme parfait, capable de tenir tout son corps en bride. (NEG, 1979)

A Critical Text to Emphasize with Students.

“The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge: but fools despise wisdom and instruction.” Proverbs 1:7

“El principio de la sabiduría es el temor de Jehová: Los insensatos desprecian la sabiduría y la enseñanza.” Proverbios 1:7

God is the SOURCE, the place to begin. Those who do not tap into this resource are denying themselves of the option of the ultimate fountain of enrichment and enhancement of one's life; one's very essence. It is crucial and paramount that the educator facilitate the acquisition of academic knowledge; however, it is critical that the eternal, infallible tools be shared also. One semester, at the completion of the term when a freshman, newly-enrolled student submitted an evaluation for the class, they commented that I had shared this text the first day of class. According to the student when she reflected on the content and meaning of the text, she felt a confident assurance that all was going to proceed well for her throughout her academic career at Southern Adventist University.

The Lord's Prayer²⁰

The ultimate model for the development of praying skills, as well as, becoming more at ease in praying in another language is found in Matthew 6 -

9 After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name.

10 Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.

11 Give us this day our daily bread.

12 And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.

13 And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

Mateo 6 -

²⁰ In my classes, if students choose to they may write their prayer out before sharing with the class. This is one of the most commonly used resources, in particular when they are beginning their language acquisition process.

9. Vosotros, pues, oréis así: Padre nuestro, que estás en el cielo. Santificado sea tu nombre.
10. Venga tu reino. Hágase tu voluntad en la tierra como en el cielo.
11. Danos hoy nuestro pan de cada día.
12. Perdona nuestras ofensas, como también nosotros perdonamos a los que nos ofenden.
13. No nos dejes caer en tentación y líbranos del mal. Amén.

Familiarity with these most meaningful verses provides a sense of serenity, in particular when a student is beginning to pray in a new language. Also, using a previously acquired proficiency promotes in student comprehension to the perception that language acquisition is, at its very core the acquisition of the increase of one's vocabulary. In other words, instead of thinking of an additional language being added to one's repertoire of knowledge, it become an opportunity for the amplification of one's vocabulary; a second-language acquisition is a tool for language expansion and adoption of synonyms to what one already knows. Also, one is able to explore the differences of the use of lexis to gain a deeper appreciation of the author's message.

Questions that have arisen as a result of having meditation time at the beginning of each class –

- *If you knew that you only had 24 hours left on this earth, with whom and where would you want to be?
- *Can anyone be passionate?
- *Do you believe Psalm 119:105 to be true?
- *Why ask philosophical questions?

These student queries served as a springboard for engaging class discussions, opening up times for self-reflection, and the preparation of students for everyday life. As human beings, on a regular basis, we are faced with decisions, and the question is, where one must turn to have infallible, unwavering, steadfast knowledge. What is the fountain of divinely-focused decision-making?

Conclusion

Thus, languages provide a gateway to a temporal productive global citizenship, as well as, the necessary preparation for the eternal. Knowing the Holy Scriptures as the habitation of all that is one's guiding force for one's earthly life provides religious values that pave the way to global Christian citizenship and eternal life.

WORDS MATTER: RELIGIOUS VALUES OR CHRISTIAN VALUES—THAT’S

THE QUESTION

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Do words really matter? Basic linguistics teaches us that a *linguistic sign* – a word, a symbol – is unmotivated (i.e. arbitrary)? Thus, when you hear the sound /tri/ or read the word **t-r-e-e** the mental picture you deploy has no logical justification. Indeed if you know French and you hear /a**RbR**/, you form the exact same image in your mind. A swahilophone will do the same if he or she hears /**mti**/ . So if language appears to be that arbitrary, why then should words matter? Well, words matter because there is another, deeper reality of language that plays out, beyond the descriptive level (i.e. phonological and physical) we just looked at. Two aspects of that reality must be underscored here: language is not simply a system for naming a reality which pre-exist it; but that language is in fact a primary structure, one that orders the reality of any given linguistic community. In other words, language is the primary system of cultural existence and it works to structure what we think we know - so much that “how we see is what we see”, to borrow Peter Barry’s words.

However, establishing that words matter does not substantiate in the speakers minds the full consciousness about the semantics of their language. Typically, most of us do not reflect on the deeper meaning of the words we use routinely. We just use them because language has become an automatic reflex to us. Research in applied linguistics shows that the frequent use of a term tends to blur its meaning while extending immensely its polysemy (i.e. enlarge its signification) both denotatively and connotatively. From the perspective of “language economy” (“*économie du langage*” in French), polysemy is a very productive and dynamic process in any language. Indeed, with a limited amount of vocabulary one can produce a

multiplicity of utterances with some level of sophistication. The flip side of that possibility is the potential for ambiguities.

Words such as “*get*” or “*come*” in English, for example, can be used to express diverse ideas by exploiting their polysemy. Moreover, by just adding a different preposition or adverb to those verbs, you greatly expand their semantic possibilities. Consider, for example, the verb *to come*: *come across*, *come back*, *come down*, *come in*, *come through*, *come up with*, *come forward*, *come off*, *come out*, *come along*, *come around*, *come from*, *come to (something)*, etc.

As illustrated in the examples above, when a word or an expression acquires a plethora of divergent meanings, due to high frequency of use, it starts to experience what Giovanni Sartori termed “conceptual stretching” (i.e. “the extension of a concept to describe divergent phenomena in varied contexts such that it loses any utility for analysis or debate”).

Could this be the case with some of the words or phrases that were chosen for the title of the current symposium? Is it possible that “religious values”, “global citizenship”, “Christian values” are phrases that are being bandied in public discourses, including in some of the most incendiary rhetoric messages heard in the market place today by the religious right and left, and even politicians? It is my opinion that, for all practical purposes, it might be helpful to pause and reflect, in the context of this symposium, on what we think those expressions mean to us and hopefully, proceed to some reality check about potential distortions in our thinking and practices.

Once again, why does this matter? It is critically important to remember the notion that language is the primary system that works to structure what we think we know and organize our specific reality.

The following questions might be helpful for our reflection: 1) Is the expression “religious values” synonymous of “Christian values”? 2) What are, in our daily living, some elements we consider as constituting the category of “religious values” and “Christian values”? Do elements in these two categories coincide, or are they different? 3) What is citizenship? Who is a citizen, who is not? 4) What constitutes

Global Christian Citizenship (or a Global Christian Citizen for that matter)? What does that mean? 5) Is a religious person necessarily a Christian?

Case in point: On a September 13, 2015 NPR published an article titled: “True Believer? Why Donald Trump Is The Choice Of The Religious Right”. Admittedly, the report can appear a bit a caricature of religiosity in many respects, but it nails down an important point of this discussion, as illustrated in these excerpts:

“In the heart of the Bible Belt in Greenville, S.C., — just down the road from the iconic evangelical school Bob Jones University — the line was long to get in to hear Trump's latest sermon against political demons.” After hearing the Trump speech, Joe Smart, a Christian, came out convinced, “He's religious, and from what I hear, he's going to change the White House back to Christianity.” Audrey Lindsey of Spartanburg confided to a journalist, “He says his favorite book is the Bible, and I believe that's what it's going to take — good, honest Christian people praying for this country.”

What to make of these statements of well-meaning Christians? The article underscores the contradiction between the professed “Religiosity” of the candidate and his real life. The man himself publically declared that he does not believe he has asked God to forgive his sins, “I am not sure I have. I just go on and try to do a better job from there ... if I do something wrong, I think, I just try and make it right. I don't bring God into that picture. I don't.” And he concludes by saying: “When I drink my little wine — which is about the only wine I drink — and have my little cracker, I guess that is a form of asking for forgiveness and I do that as often as possible because I feel cleansed.”

The journalist goes on to point out other flaws of the politician in the area of his business dealing, his marital life, his use of vulgar and harsh terms about women, and his hateful language directed towards immigrants and other minorities. This report, anecdotal as it may look, begs the question of our understanding, as Christians, of religious values.

Religious Values

Religious values can be defined as a system of beliefs, code of moral conduct, rules and laws, traditions, even performance. Think, if you may, of Biblical times. Jesus Himself had to confront such a

prevalent view of religious values by His contemporaries. The indictment He pronounces in Matthew 23 is probably the severest in the gospels. There is no question that the religious leaders of His time considered themselves religious and were considered as such by their flocks. They had developed sets of values that they highly esteemed and they expected their followers to do the same. In practice, the man-made values became rules, traditions, and performance. Additionally, they made themselves to believe that the observance of those rules and traditions were means of salvation. Jesus was compelled to tell them, “You lock people out of the kingdom of heaven. You won’t go in yourselves, and you keep others from going in” (v. 14 CEV). He had to reiterate that He was the truth and the only way of salvation.

There is something viciously addicting with man-made values, religious or otherwise; they persuade those who espouse them that they are in control. Men like being in control. To make things worse, this distorted view of the values camouflages itself in an apparent laudable and honest quest for God. In reality, however, such religious values may amount to a human effort of reaching for God, which is, at best, a path to nowhere as Paul states in Romans chapter seven and eight, and at worse, a recipe for the creation of religious monsters as the current events demonstrate it.

The accusation has been levelled against us (i.e. Adventists) that we are a legalistic “sect”. It is possible that our emphasis on atypical things such as diet, dress code, music style, etc., has caused this mischaracterization. Our duty is to ensure that there is more to that? Jesus, Paul, and the other apostles warned early Christians of this trap and pointed to Christ as the only way and the only source of values that grant us true freedom.

In as much as religious values amount to sets of dos’ and don’ts, can then dos and don’ts pave the way to Christian citizenship? To answer this question, it is useful to define briefly the concept of Christian values.

Christian Values

Christian values are those that are modeled on Christ’s life and teaching. Contrary to religious values which constitute, as it has been recognized in Christian circles, an attempt by men to reach up to God,

whereas, Christian values represent God reaching down to man. It is Christ, the light, the truth and the way, who comes down to the drowning men and women and rescues them. In this context, Ellen G. White writes, “Christianity—how many are there who do not know what it is! It is not something put on the outside. It is a life inwrought with the life of Jesus. It means that we are wearing the robe of Christ’s righteousness” {AG 57.6}. This is our Christian identity. Our Christian citizenship has to align itself with that identity and not hinder it.

What is Citizenship?

In the secular world, a citizen is a member of a political community, a nation-state who satisfies specific legal prerequisites. Thus, she or he is a full participant in civic and civil society, endowed with a whole range of rights and duties (i.e. vote, hold public office, volunteer, defend the nation, etc.). What stand out in this definition is, nonetheless, the legal aspects attached to the notion of citizenship and the relationship between the citizen and the state. It is beyond the scope of this presentation to discuss such issues as the citizen’s political, economic, and social participation. Or to delineate the strategies of remaining an active and informed citizen in a rapidly changing society. Suffice to say that there is quite a distance between the citizen of this world, as defined, and the citizen of heaven.

Does Global Christian Citizenship entail claims to legal global duties, rights, and privileges? Is it even conceivable to have such citizenship? There are, to be sure, some commonality between the requirement of secular citizenship and Christian citizenship. Both have duties to fulfill (i.e. social responsibility, obedience to the law of the land, paying taxes, etc.). However, it’s significant that throughout the entire Bible, the people of God are encouraged to see themselves as strangers and pilgrims on this earth. It is as if conforming to the standards of the earthly citizenry is incompatible with true Christian citizenship. Our Savior Himself tells us that we are in the world, but not of the world. John 15:19 says, “The world would love you as one of its own if you belonged to it, but you are no longer part of the world. I chose you to come out of the world and so it hates you.” The Apostle Paul echoes this call in many of his writings, such as in Philippians 3:20, “But we are citizens of heaven, where the Lord Jesus Christ lives. And we are

eagerly waiting for him to return as our Savior” and In Philippians 1:27, “Above all, you must live as citizens of heaven, conducting yourselves in a manner worthy of the Good News about Christ.”

The significance of these texts in relation to how we owe to live our lives cannot be underscored, because they make it clear. Even as we carry on the Great Commission, we are still expected to “conduct ourselves in a manner worthy of the Good News of Christ”. There is an inherent responsibility entrusted to us. Rempel, quoting George McLeod in his book *Only One Way Left*, puts it this way:

“But, then, isn’t our main task as Christian laymen to evangelize the world? Should not our main efforts be directed to the proclamation of the gospel of Jesus Christ? Indeed, this is our task, but to talk piously about evangelism without real concern for human misery and the evils blighting human existence is rank hypocrisy. Evangelism in its broadest sense includes serving others in applying the gospel to the problems of human society. Social action is a vital aspect of the mission of the church, for it is by this way that we demonstrate both the love of Jesus Christ for the world and the willingness of Christians to fight against the principalities and powers of evil in his name.”

(Rempel, 31)

Ellen G. White, while emphasizing our heavenly citizenship, also concurs with the texts above in many of her writings. She affirms for instance that, “To possess true godliness means to love one another, to help one another, to make apparent the religion of Jesus in our lives. We are to be consecrated channels through which the love of Christ flows to those who need help....” {In Heavenly Places 287.5} In another book she writes, “Citizens of heaven will make the best citizens of earth. A correct view of our duty to God leads to clear perceptions of our duty to our fellow men.” {AG 57.7}

Clearly, the word of God and Mrs. White agree on the fact that we are strangers and pilgrims in this world. At the same time, as long as we are at this side of eternity and as long as we remain true to our calling, we will not place ourselves in “pleasantly circumscribed religious ghettos” Instead we will go out in the market place because “Jesus was not crucified in a Cathedral between two candles, but on a cross between two thieves; on a town garbage heap; on a crossroads so cosmopolitan that they had to write his title in Hebrew and Latin and Greek” (Rempel, 32)

To summarize, religious values can be in a synergetic and symbiotic relationship with Christian values. Indeed they do not have to be antagonistic as long as we do not put the cart before the horse. Christian values must define our religious values. And since this world is not our home and that we are only passing through, to paraphrase the popular song, it might be that we were not charged by our Lord to establish some sort of Global Citizenship, but to create global communities of travelers - not settlers - on their way with us to our eternal home.

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SUMMARY OF 2015 REYNOLDS' CHAIR SYMPOSIUM

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Summarizing the papers of my colleagues presents inherent dangers—a bit like the danger of taking an unflattering snapshot of a friend, or snapping a picture of a friend that cuts off their head or their feet. Worse yet, summarizing the work of my colleagues could be a bit like a political cartoon gone wrong—capturing some of the basic features, but perhaps missing the most obvious point. However, in spite of those inherent dangers, I will attempt a summary of my colleagues' papers and suggest several themes and organizing unity to the thoughts they have offered this weekend.

At the start of this year's Reynolds' Chair Symposium, Dr. John McCoy posed two questions for our consideration and asked that we listen to each paper in light of those two questions. The first question was, "What is the definition of a global Christian citizen?" The second was, "Are we at Southern Adventist University preparing our students to be global Christian citizens?" My summary is offered with those questions in mind. For each paper I will offer: 1) a brief summary of significant points, 2) implications for defining the idea of global Christian citizenship, and 3) suggested application for Southern faculty and staff as they consider nurturing global Christian citizens.

Before commenting on each presentation I offer five themes that seemed to run as threads through all the papers. Those five themes are:

1. Intelligent Engagement
2. Bold Humility/Humble Boldness
3. Spiritual Authenticity
4. Global Awareness (cultural, social, political, and more)
5. Genuine Desire to Benefit People Here and Now (without ignoring eternal realities and opportunities)

Here is a summary of the ten presentations which comprised the 2015 Reynolds Symposium:

Dr. Linda Tym—No Man is an Island: Instability, Isolation, and the Postmodern Christian

1) Brief summary of significant points

- Postmodernism considers isolated individuals as “islands”, and, thus, an individual’s collection of personal memories further isolates and accentuates one’s instability.
- However, there is an alternate way to view individuals and memory—the concept of shared memories.
- In the sharing of memories, community is built and isolated individuals are joined together.
- As believers, we may collect and treasure shared memories (starting with those passed down by writers of the Bible) and build both stable individuals and caring communities.

2) Implications for defining the idea of global Christian citizenship

- Pursue community without sacrificing mature individuality (and visa versa).
- Use individual memories as an anchor for self-stability.
- Use shared memories as an anchor for community connection.

3) Suggested application for Southern faculty and staff for nurturing global Christian citizens

- Does our campus life foster both the development of the mature individual and the corporate community?

Dr. Laurie Stankavich—Power of Paradox

1) Brief summary of significant points

- There is a sharp contrast between Christian thought and postmodern thought regarding power.
- It is true—global society is wracked with social injustice. But postmodernism is wrong about what’s wrong. Moreover, it is wrong about how to correct what’s wrong.
- Correction will NOT come through subversion, deception, manipulation, nor the overthrow of the accepted powers and authorities of society.

- Correction will RATHER come through the “Way of Love” modeled by Jesus.
- Power, then, is living in God’s Kingdom, practicing lives of compassion and action on behalf of the oppressed.

2) Implications for defining the idea of global Christian citizenship

- Be clear about what is wrong with society and how it can be righted.
- Employ loving service rather than subversive leverage.
- Live today as a citizen of heaven in the earthly global community.

3) Suggested application for Southern faculty and staff for nurturing global Christian citizens

- Do faculty, staff, and students grasp the wounded reality of society and respond to it with lives of compassion and service?

Amanda Ruf—A 21st Century Student of Christianity and Postmodernism

1) Brief summary of significant points

- There is great value in asking, “I wonder what other people think about _____?”
- The internet is an incredible tool for asking just such a question.
- The internet connects one to a variety of “global voices”.
- Don’t fear Postmodernism as the great “anti-Christian enemy”.
- Darkness flees from light not the other way around.
- Listen and be curious about what others think.

2) Implications for defining the idea of global Christian citizenship

- Be interested and curious to hear a variety of global voices.
- Be discerning but not fearful as you listen.
- Use the internet as a tool for “global listening”.

3) Suggested application for Southern faculty and staff for nurturing global Christian citizens

- Are we fostering curious, intelligent use of the internet?

Amanda Gomez— Culture, Christianity, and Internet Memes

1) Brief summary of significant points

- We live in a world of pictures.
- Modernism forces artificial dualism (either/or thinking).
- Postmodernism invites to a more holistic approach.
- Internet Memes are a current cultural expressions that can create a shared experience.
- Memes require thoughtful engagement and interpretation.
- Memes can be a method for engaging the marginalized.

2) Implications for defining the idea of global Christian citizenship

- Be open to new forms of cultural communication.
- Listen with both head and heart.
- Engage curiously with the marginalized.

3) Suggested application for Southern faculty and staff for nurturing global Christian citizens

- Do we spurn or encourage new forms of cultural engagement?
- Are we truly curious about engaging the marginalized?

Oliver Bragg—Education and the Gospel Commission

1) Brief summary of significant points

- At Southern I learned of Christ.
- In the workplace I have learned that I can act like Christ when I cannot speak words for Christ.

2) Implications for defining the idea of global Christian citizenship

- It is possible and honorable for Christians to learn to think politically.

3) Suggested application for Southern faculty and staff for nurturing global Christian citizens

- Are we teaching Christians to think politically at Southern?

Colton Adams, Faith and Politics

1) Brief summary of significant points

- There is value in the implicit sharing of the gospel by a life of service in civic life.
- The role of a Christian in civic life can be to delve into laws, policies, and civic responsibilities as one who desires the good of others and sees the value of each person as a child of God.

2) Implications for defining the idea of global Christian citizenship

- Citizens of heaven can be engaged citizens of this society.
- Comfort with political systems and processes is not hostile to the gospel.

3) Suggested application for Southern faculty and staff for nurturing global Christian citizens

- How can we better foster “dual citizenship” at Southern—citizens of heaven who contribute to real civic needs?

Sarah Fredheim—No Need for Shame

1) Brief summary of significant points

- Adventist faith and an Adventist education are not a disadvantage in the larger academic world.

2) Implications for defining the idea of global Christian citizenship

- Continue strong scriptural and spiritual emphasis without apology.

3) Suggested application for Southern faculty and staff for nurturing global Christian citizens

- Are we mentoring students in confident spiritual and academic excellence?

Dr. Adrienne Royo—Language as the Gateway to Global and Celestial Citizenship

1) Brief summary of significant points

- Students can be challenged to think about spiritual concepts.
- At a Christian University it can be overt, such as using scripture.
- At a secular University it must be more subtle, such as reading and discussing literature with strong moral themes that open conversations about life and even God.
- Professors at any University may show love for and interest in their students.

2) Implications for defining the idea of global Christian citizenship

- Look for cultural themes that will open significant and spiritual conversations.
- Show genuine interest in the people closest to you.

3) Suggested application for Southern faculty and staff for nurturing global Christian citizens

- Are we searching for cultural and societal clues to open significant and spiritual conversations?
- Are faculty and staff genuinely interested in one another and in students?

Dr. Pierre Nzokizwa—Words Matter: Religious Values or Christian Values—that's the Question.

1) Brief summary of significant points

- Language is not simply a system for naming things.
- Language is the primary structure that organizes and orders our reality (how we think).
- We need a Christian value (God reaching out to man) rather than a religious value (man reaching out to God).
- We need Christ-centered values not behavior-centered values.
- Religious values are an attempt to maintain our own control.

2) Implications for defining the idea of global Christian citizenship

- Pay attention to the use of words.

- Focus on Christ rather than on behavior.
- Encourage heavenly citizenship.

3) Suggested application for Southern faculty and staff for nurturing global Christian citizens

- Do we focus more on religious values or Christ-centered values?
- Are we nurturing heavenly citizenship?



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